I Shop, Therefore I Am: The Meaning of Fast and Slow Fashion Consumption

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Abstract

The contemporary fashion system is dominated by fast fashion business models that encourage unsustainable production practices and continuous consumption. Resulting environmental and social externalities, such as environmental degradation and violation of workers' rights, have sparked global interest in sustainable fashion consumption and the new movement slow fashion. However, the tension between the allure of fast fashion and consumers' concern for environmental and social welfare manifests as inconsistent attitudes and consumption behaviour. This attitude-behaviour gap represents a significant threat to the future of sustainable, or slow, fashion. As consumers engage in fashion consumption that has distinct symbolic and cultural meaningfulness, the desire to construct or convey one's self can outweigh the drivers to be sustainable.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption by understanding the meanings consumers attach to fast and slow fashion, and how this can provide benefit to marketing academics and practitioners. To do so, a qualitative research design and an interpretive, phenomenological approach is employed. The methods of semi-structured in-depth interviews and thematic analysis elicit the meanings and articulations of fast and slow fashion, the personal and societal trade-offs consumers consider when adopting sustainable fashion behaviours, and how these reconcile with consumers' belief systems.

The findings reveal that consumers appropriate aesthetic, symbolic and cultural meanings from fast and slow fashion to achieve self-objectives of connection, self-identity and social identity. However, the way consumers use meanings to achieve self-objectives differs, resulting in competing self-objectives or goals. In turn, consumers use moral disengagement, displace and diffuse responsibility, and carry out fashion consumption behaviour with varying levels of reflection and consciousness. This enables consumers to maintain their sustainable attitudes, and minimise agential connections between their behaviour and their behaviour's consequences. Consumers also make personal (i.e. decisions that compromise personal values, beliefs and attitudes) and societal (i.e. decisions that compromise environmental and social welfare) trade-offs in order to

achieve self-objectives.

This study is significant as it illustrates that meanings are used to define and orientate consumers' fashion consumption behaviour, and are inherent throughout the decision-making process. By contributing new insights into how consumers continue to behave in ways that are inconsistent with their attitudes, marketing academics and practitioners are better able to understand, influence and predict sustainable fashion consumption. Moreover, new insights benefit more conscious business, marketing and consumption practices.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signature: _____

Ellie Descatoires

Date: 18 May 2017

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I hope this thesis will make you stop to think about what you buy and at what cost, like it did for me. We can be the changemakers.

Ethics Approval

This study attained ethical approval by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) on 27 April 2016, reference number 16/124.

Who grew this cotton
Who sowed the seeds
Who spun these threads
Who wove this cloth

Whose silk is that
Who turned the worm
Who sheared the sheep
Who's getting fleeced

Who fixed the hem
Who broke the system
Who's on her feet
Who made my clothes

Who sewed the seams
Who stitched the tag
Whose fingers bled
Whose fault is this

Who grew the brand
Who hemmed and hawed
Who hired the helpless
Who dyed for you

Who sweats the details
Whose sweater is that
Who shot it first
Who gets a fair shot

Who's overdressed
Who's oppressed
Who's high on fashion
Who's high on fumes

Whose dress is to die for
Who shops to live
Who gets the bargain
Whose life's on sale

Who's always searching
Who's never satisfied
Who's got nothing to wear
Who cares

Who brags her bags
Who crows her clothes
Who swoons her shoes
Who posts the most

Who sets the price
Who pays the cost
Who's asking
Who needs to know

Who embroiders truth
Who's naked underneath
Who are you
Who are you wearing?

- Sasha Haines-Stiles, *Fashion Revolution*, 2016

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background

The collapse of the Rana Plaza factory complex in Dhaka, Bangladesh in 2013 killed and injured thousands of garment workers - people who made clothes for many well-known, multinational brands and retailers (Fashion Revolution, 2015). It was this tragedy that woke the world to the environmental and social externalities that are rife in the fashion industry (Bly, Gwozdz & Reisch, 2015; Minney, 2016). Yet, issues such as environmental degradation and violation of workers' rights continue to plague the industry - often considered norms - as fashion brands remain driven by the search for the lowest production costs and highest profit. The contemporary fashion system is characterised by planned obsolescence that has arguably intensified with the advent of fast fashion. The fast fashion phenomenon is a highly successful and increasingly prevalent business model that has encouraged continuous consumption and proliferated unsustainable production practices throughout the fashion industry (Kawamura, 2005). Therefore, fast fashion has a profound effect on the quality of life at present, and that of the future (Kilbourne, McDonagh & Prothero, 1997).

Ordinarily, fashion would not be considered a positive force for sustainability (Pan, Roedl, Blevis & Thomas, 2015). However, the new movement slow fashion offers a promising avenue to resolve the tensions between fashion and sustainability. Slow fashion aims to counteract the demand for fast fashion, and the multitude of negative issues that afflict the fashion industry (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). Slow fashion is not simply a means to slow down consumption and production; it aims to protect the well-being of the environment, communities and workers (Clark, 2008; Fletcher, 2010; Ertekin & Atik, 2015). Moreover, slow fashion cultivates a holistic understanding of sustainable fashion consumption by addressing economic, environmental and social issues.

In order to effect wider systems-change, consumers must support slow fashion through purchase. Consumers are said to increasingly care about and demand fashion that does not harm the environment or the workers making it (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). However, the tension between the allure of fast fashion and concern for environmental

and social welfare manifests as inconsistent attitudes and consumption behaviour. This attitude-behaviour gap represents a significant threat to the future of sustainable fashion (e.g. Carrigan & Attalla, 2001).

While a plethora of previous research has sought to account for the phenomenon, a review of extant literature finds that there is a gap for studies that explore the meanings consumers attach to fast and slow fashion products in the acts of consuming them. Consumers engage in fashion consumption that has distinct symbolic and cultural meaningfulness, which has been overlooked in sustainable fashion consumption research (Dolan, 2002). Consumption is inherently linked with one's sense of self, personal and social meanings and values, and products, such as clothing, act as signifiers of social relationships and cultural allegiance (Seyfang, 2004). Thus, delving into how consumers attach meaning to their purchase and possession of clothing provides rich insight into the attitude-behaviour gap contradiction by understanding factors that may facilitate or impede sustainable fashion consumption.

1.2 Problem Definition

The aims of this study are detailed in the following sections, with the overall research problem being reduced to four key research questions.

1.2.1 Research Problem

This research study aims to explore the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption by understanding the meanings consumers attach to fast and slow fashion, and how this can provide benefit to marketing academics and practitioners.

1.2.2 Research Questions

RQ1. What meanings do consumers attach to fast and slow fashion?

RQ2. What do these meanings articulate?

RQ3. What are the personal and societal trade-offs consumers consider when adopting sustainable fashion behaviours?

RQ4. How do these meanings and articulations reconcile with consumers' personal belief systems?

1.3 Methodology

To address the research problem, the researcher adopted a constructivist framework, which assumes all knowledge and meaningful reality is constructed by people's interactions with objects and their world, and then transferred within an essentially social context (Crotty, 1998). An interpretive perspective of phenomenology and a phenomenological methodology informed the research methods of semi-structured in-depth interviews and thematic analysis. Interviews were conducted with ten participants (Creswell, 2013) who had individually experienced the study's central phenomena, and were interested in understanding the nature and meanings of the phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). Thematic analysis was used to uncover consistent, underlying patterns of meaning inherent in the phenomena being perceived (Langdridge, 2004) from across the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This helped to develop and organise codes and themes that derive a complete description of the phenomena as consciously experienced by participants (Polkinghorne, 1989; Moustakas, 1994).

1.4 Contributions of this Research

This study takes a completely new approach to exploring the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption by seeking to understand the meanings that consumers attach to fast and slow fashion. In turn, the findings yield many new and surprising insights that increase our knowledge of the attitude-behaviour gap and sustainable fashion consumption phenomena. Contributions of this research are threefold: theoretical, empirical and practical (Ladik & Stewart, 2008). This study develops new conceptual links between established theories and unique insights that help to explore and explain why consumers continue to behave in ways that are inconsistent with their attitudes. Collecting real world data in an authentic research setting provides conclusions that are grounded in empirical evidence, that is, participants' experiences. The implications of the findings provide workable insights and recommendations for strategic adjustments that start to speak to and inform thinking, forging the way for more conscious business, marketing and consumption practices.

1.5 Thesis Overview

This thesis is organised into five chapters. Chapter One has outlined the background and importance of this study, leading to the research problem and aims. Chapter Two provides a comprehensive review of the literature used to develop the conceptual framework of theories, assumptions, beliefs and expectations that inform and support this study.

Chapter Three explains the logic that determined the research decisions and methodological framework. The researcher's paradigmatic assumptions are explained, as are the data collection and data analysis procedures, and the principles used to establish trustworthiness and authenticity. Chapter Four presents the findings from the data analysis as four themes: understanding, meanings, attitudes and behaviour. Chapter Five discusses the findings to explicitly answer the research questions and provide additional insight into the study's central phenomena. Conclusions are then drawn to explain the theoretical, empirical and practical contributions of this study, and its implications for marketing practitioners.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This present research study aims to explore the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption by understanding the meanings consumers attach to fast and slow fashion, and how this can provide benefit to marketing academics and practitioners. Hence, this chapter provides a comprehensive review of the literature used to develop the conceptual framework of theories, assumptions, beliefs and expectations that inform and support this study. First, the historical and theoretical underpinnings of fashion and its link to consumption and materialism are discussed. Next, the current state of the fashion system and the characteristics of fast fashion are examined to highlight the environmental and social externalities that afflict the fashion industry. The new movement of slow fashion is then described to illustrate a potential means to facilitate sustainable systems change. Tensions between consumers' attitudes and consumption behaviour manifest as an attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption. Subsequent analysis of the attitude-behaviour gap identifies key empirical and theoretical limitations of existing research approaches, and determines the gaps in the literature. Finally, an alternative approach to exploring the phenomenon is proposed by understanding the meaning consumers attach to fast and slow fashion.

2.2 Fashion

To explore fashion as a phenomenon it is important to first consider its historical underpinnings. The concept of fashion changed historically, in turn changing the phenomenon of fashion (Kawamura, 2005). Fashion today is markedly different from that of past centuries. For example, in the fifteenth century fashion was an indicator and distinguishing artefact of class and social status, a privilege limited to aristocracy (Perrot, 1994; Roche, 1994). Come the nineteenth century, social life significantly changed (Kawamura, 2005). Fashion was no longer lead solely by aristocracy, but also other people who had the financial means to aspire to aristocracy's social space (Sombart, 1967; Perrot, 1994; Kawamura, 2005). By the twentieth century, fashion became more democratic by transcending class; individuals had the right to look fashionable

irrespective of their class or status (Kawamura, 2005). Thus, despite the time period, change can be considered the definitive essence of fashion.

Why does fashion change? There are two prevailing perspectives: economic and socio-cultural (Kawamura, 2005). The economic perspective views fashion as a prominent part of the marketing institution for expanding markets (Ertekin & Atik, 2015), becoming a fundamental tool to increase sales and drive economic growth (Fletcher, 2010). Some commentators propose that change in fashion is a conspiracy to stimulate the market and a way for brands to increase their trade (Kawamura, 2005; Ertekin & Atik, 2015). From this perspective, the fashion industry dictates to the consumer what fashion is, and the consumer accepts what is offered (Sombart, 1967). Hence, fashion, the fashion industry and the fashion system are characterised by trends and cycles (Nystrom, 1928) with fashion objects emphasised as a commodity (Anspach, 1967). Traditionally, trends and cycles were seasonal: brands forecasted consumer demand and trends and offered two main seasons per year, with a standard turnaround time of around six months from catwalk to consumer (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006; Ertekin & Atik, 2015).

However, from the sociological perspective, change in fashion represents a fluidity of social structure, afforded by a certain type of society where the social stratification system demonstrates flexibility (Flugel, 1930). Here, fashion is a mark of modern civilisation (Blumer, 1969) that is not universally accepted (Bell, 1976). Fashion is inherently linked with culture, involving collective activities, collective groups and social co-operation (Kawamura, 2005). In turn, cultural objects become a part of a culture and contribute to that culture. Thus, fashion can be considered a manufactured cultural symbol that manifests as a style of dress accepted by a group of people (Solomon & Rabolt, 2004) during an epoch, influencing the rapidity of changes in fashion (Koenig, 1973). This production-of-culture perspective extends the definitive essence of fashion by interlinking the change with the idea of novelty (Peterson, 1976). It is argued that novelty is highly valued in fashion (Kawamura, 2005) corresponding with a need for newness that governs fashion-orientated attitudes and behaviours (Koenig, 1973). This study proposes that fashion encompasses both the economic perspective, where fashion is shaped by industry, and the sociological perspective, where fashion emerges from cultures and subcultures. Further, the fashion system allows and facilitates fashion change to continually take place.

2.2.1 Defining Fashion

This study makes a key distinction between fashion, which conveys meanings, and an object that an individual can use or wear, to which fashion can be applied and commoditised (Kawamura, 2005). There are fashions that exist in various aspects of one's intellectual and social life (Kawamura, 2005), applying to many different spheres ranging from art, to conduct, to opinion, to transportation, to management (Bly, et al., 2015). While fashion can be applied in many ways, it has historically and theoretically been predominantly referred to as personal appearance, personal adornment, and clothing (Ertekin & Atik, 2015). Thus, fashion is often used interchangeably with 'clothing' as the constructs are considered synonymous. As this study aims to explore sustainable fashion consumption, it is important to outline that this study applies the concept of fashion to clothing. This study proposes that fashion is a concept, and fashion consumption through the purchase of clothing is the practice of the phenomenon (Kawamura, 2005). Fashion adds extra value to clothing by symbolising the intangible elements that create the allure of clothing for consumers (Kawamura, 2005) with consumers perceiving that they can acquire these intrinsic values through consuming clothing (Bell, 1976).

Thus, fashion is a system of meanings (Barthes, 1983; McCracken, 1986) consisting of all the organisations and individuals involved in creating and transferring symbolic meanings to cultural goods. The organisational field of fashion encompasses many key actors including designers, manufacturers, retailers, marketers, media, associations, educators, endorsers and consumers (Ertekin & Atik, 2015). The fashion system is also one of the key modes of creation and movement of cultural meaning (McCracken, 1986). Such meaning allows consumers to learn how to wear clothing and convey personal meaning, as well as learn how to wear clothing in specific social and cultural contexts and convey collective meaning, as each context has different meanings (Barthes, 1983). However, consumers are continuously engaged in interpretive dialogue during the appropriation of symbolic and cultural meanings, which changes their localised knowledge and value systems (Ertekin & Atik, 2015). Such reworking is influenced by consumers' desire to fulfil the self through fashion discourses (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). This study proposes that fashion as applied to clothing can be broadly defined as the symbolic and cultural meanings that clothing possesses, in particular, the ways consumers use clothing to express identity, social status and belonging (Pan, et al., 2015).

2.2.2 Fashion and Consumption

Critical to understanding sustainable fashion consumption is to understand fashion consumption itself (Bly, et al., 2015). In order for fashion to be adopted and consumed it is turned into a tangible commodity, such as clothing (Kawamura, 2005). Once fashion is produced, individuals must consume it so that the belief surrounding it can be perpetuated. Without the reciprocity of individuals receiving and consuming fashion, the cultural product of fashion is not complete. Fashion influences consumption, and consumption influences fashion. Hence, fashion plays an essential role in shaping consumption practices, with meaning assigned to the acts and contexts of consuming fashion (Sassatelli, 2007).

Consumption refers to the internal and external factors that influence consumer behaviours (Bly, et al., 2015). Consumption can be considered the typical condition of modernity and postmodernity, characterised by a perpetual desire for endless difference (Kawamura, 2005). Further, consumption imposes mobility on distinctive social signs, and is a status and symbolic strategy (Baudrillard, 1981, 1993). Fashion is not consumed to simply satisfy basic needs, rather to achieve a range of other objectives such as symbolic self-completion, distinction and adaptation (Jackson, 2005). This is particularly the case with clothing as it is constantly on display (Berger & Heath, 2007) being used to emanate meanings about the wearer to others and to reinforce those meanings to oneself (Belk, 1988). Consumers believe that fashion allows them to construct and reconstruct desired individual lifestyles and identities (Crane, 2000) that fit within the boundaries of social norms (Murray, 2002). Thus, consumption is spurred by an ongoing need to attain and maintain a desired social position. Faurschou (1987) suggests that fashion

> "*immerses consumers' self-perceptions in meanings and social ideals that foster depthless, materialistic outlooks and a perpetual state of dissatisfaction over one's current lifestyle and physical appearance.*" (p. 82).

As a result, consumption has evolved into a process of living to consume, rather than consuming to live, with consumers increasingly dedicating more time, thought and emotion to activities relating to purchase (Kilbourne, et al., 1997). This is epitomised by the current state of the fashion system, which is dominated by rapid change, cheap products and a profusion of styles (Thompson & Haytko, 1997), or fast fashion. Many fast fashion brands have taken advantage of the changes in consumers' consumption

practices by creating conducive environments for mass consumption (Kawamura, 2005). The fast fashion phenomenon proliferated unsustainable practises throughout the fashion industry that jeopardise environmental and social welfare (Kawamura, 2005), having a profound effect on the quality of life at present, and that of the future (Kilbourne, et al., 1997). In response, there has been a call for the fashion industry to place a central focus on sustainability. Slow fashion brands aim to alleviate the strain on environmental and social welfare (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). Fast and slow fashion will each be explored further in the following sections.

While many consumers mirror concern for environmental and social welfare (Bly, et al., 2015) they are also reluctant to uptake slow or sustainable fashion. This indicates that the desire to fulfil the self can outweigh the drivers to be ethical or consume sustainably (e.g. McNeill & Moore, 2015). Further, the desire individuals possess to consume alongside efforts to reduce or limit consumption presents a paradox. Therefore, the discrepancy between attitudes and behaviour signifies that the meanings assigned to fast and slow fashion must be playing an important role in determining sustainable fashion consumption, which this study seeks to understand.

2.2.3 Fashion and Materialism

One construct related to consumption that must be considered is materialism. Materialism fosters consumption behaviours that reflect status and success (Belk, 1985). Consumers' materialistic values also assign symbolic meanings relating to the construction of self and identity to consumption objects. Materialism manifests as consumers place emphasis on owning material objects over emotional, intellectual or spiritual well-being. As consumption evolved, it became a widely-accepted means of pursuing and measuring success, or a 'good' life (Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002), with consumers engaging in patterns of purchasing material objects as a way to obtain happiness (Belk, 1985; Richins & Dawson, 1992). Resultantly, the dominating paradigm equates human welfare to increasing material well-being (Kilbourne, et al., 1997), with change, progress and the desire for 'new' acting as a means of keeping the capitalist system alive (Ertekin & Atik, 2015). Thus, materialism comprises the importance that consumers attach to possessions, and whether such possessions are a source of great satisfaction or dissatisfactions in consumers lives (Belk, 1985). In this study, the possessions considered are fast and slow fashion clothing.

Throughout marketing literature, materialism has been described with implicit positive and negative connotations (e.g. Larsen, Sirgy & Wright, 1999). Materialism is predominantly considered a self-imposed societal mandate (Mannion & Brannick, 1995) that is wasteful and overindulgent, devoid of otherworldly concerns (Twitchwell, 1999). Others argue that materialism is important in orientating one's use of money and possessions for personal happiness and social progress (e.g. Ward & Wackman, 1971). Therefore, it can be suggested that materialism is not innately 'bad'; it is its potential consequences at an individual-level and societal-level that can be negative. For example, consuming material objects can leave individuals dissatisfied (Belk, 1985). In quite the contradiction, this dissatisfaction often causes individuals to further engage with materialism, spurring overconsumption, which poses a major impediment for sustainable consumption (Larsen, et al., 1999). In turn, materialism can cause consumers to become disconnected from their sense of community, and in turn become insensitive to how their consumption behaviours can have a negative effect on others (Belk, 1988). Consequently, if material objects such as fashion become a main focus in an individual's life, it can outrank achievements, personal relationships, other values and even religion (Richins & Dawson, 1992). This study proposes that fashion can outrank ethics and sustainability due to the meanings consumers assign to fast and slow fashion, as reflected in the discrepancy between consumers' attitudes and behaviours toward sustainable fashion consumption.

2.3 Fast Fashion

The fast fashion phenomenon revolutionised the fashion industry over the past decade (McNeill & Moore, 2015) catapulting change as the definitive essence of fashion to a new level. Fashion transitioned from a push system, where brands dictated trends to consumers, to a pull system, where brands respond to consumer demand (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010). Concepts such as 'quick response' and 'just-in-time' delivery were developed (Bruce & Daly, 2006; Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010) with fast fashion brands perfecting these strategies to achieve two goals: reduce lead-time and offer universally affordable, trend-based products as a means of stimulating continual economic growth (Byun & Sternquist, 2008; Cachon & Swinney, 2011). Fast fashion accelerated the traditional fashion business model, offering additional, smaller and more frequent product cycles (Byun & Sternquist, 2008). The promise of new clothing attainable by the average consumer boldly affirmed that continuous change and

continuous consumption should be the norm (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). Therefore, fast fashion created new norms around how fashion should be consumed.

2.3.1 Characteristics of Fast Fashion

Fast fashion is characterised by several marketing factors including high impulse purchase, low predictability, high volatility of market demand and shorter life cycles (Fernie & Sparks, 1998). The clothing itself is part of low-cost collections based on imitating high-end luxury or designer trends (Fletcher, 2008). Its fast response system compressed the formerly standard turnaround time of six months from catwalk to consumer to a matter of weeks (Tokatli, 2008). As a result, fast fashion brands offer over twenty collections per year, with clothing collections changing every two to three weeks. Brands such as Zara receive new products twice a week, and H & M Hennes & Mauritz AB (H&M) receive new products daily (Cline, 2012). Therefore, fast fashion brands thrive on rapid prototyping, small batches of products with large variety, efficient transportation and delivery, and 'door ready' products, that is, products already on hangers with price tags attached (Skov, 2002). Routinely sourcing new trends and replenishing stock acts as a key strategy to keep consumers coming back, however has had the side effect of seemingly contradictory mass exclusivity (Joy, Sherry, Venkatesh, Wang & Chan, 2012). Fast fashion by its very nature affords instant gratification and encourages disposability, sometimes being referred to as 'throwaway' fashion (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013) or 'McFashion' (Joy, et al., 2012).

Fierce competition in the fashion industry has caused many brands to adopt the 'speed to market' approach (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). Adopting this approach emphasises market responsiveness and agility through identifying consumer preferences and procuring fashion that is not available in the stores of competitors. Fast fashion brands use real-time data to forecast future trends based on the desires of consumers (Jackson, 2001). The inability to predict such trends and imitate or procure fashion quickly can lead to longer lead-times and therefore failure to attract consumers (Christopher, Lowson & Peck, 2004; Richardson, 2004). However, due to the multitude of trends and consumer preferences, it is impossible for forecasts to always be accurate. Thus, fast fashion business models deliberately employ strategies such as undersupply and no replenishment (Sorescu, Frambach, Singh, Rangaswamy & Bridges, 2011). Small amounts of stock foster a sense of scarcity, which causes consumers to perceive fast fashion products more favourably (Eisend, 2008). Fast fashion brands also reinforce a message of 'buy now

because this product will not be here later', which expedites decision making and encourages more frequent visit to stores (Byun & Sternquist, 2008). Further, the latest trends at affordable prices make fast fashion accessible for nearly all social classes, making the industry attractive to many consumers (Ertekin & Atik, 2015)

Therefore, an emphasis on reduced lead-time and costs has seen brands compromise on the quality of offerings and production practices, directly contributing to a lack of supply chain transparency and social and environmental sacrifices (Johansson, 2010; Fletcher, 2010). As a result, the fashion industry is rife with issues such as environmental degradation and violation of workers' rights (Fletcher, 2008). Moreover, planned obsolescence has sped up the consumption rate of fashion, to the detriment of long-term sustainability (Bly, et al., 2015). However, the supposed economic importance of the fast fashion industry has inhibited industry-wide movement toward sustainability, legitimising unethical production in the marketplace and fostering unsustainable fashion consumption behaviours by consumers (McNeill & Moore, 2015).

2.3.2 Fast Fashion and the Consumer

The rapid dissemination of the fast fashion phenomenon is often attributed to socio-cultural shifts (Cachon & Swinney, 2011) such as consumer lifestyles, attitudes toward consumption and an insatiable demand for newness (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). Recognising these shifts, fast fashion brands focus on competitive advantage from fashion trends and consumer demand. However, this poses a significant pressure to compete not only based on price, but on an ability to deliver newness and refreshed clothing. Thus, fast fashion relies on constant product (i.e. styles) and socio-cultural change (Bruce & Daly, 2006). Further, Sproles and Burns (1994) suggest that socio-cultural changes have created a faster pace of living, with society now orientated toward continuous change. Mass communication has allowed consumers to become more knowledgeable, and readily aware of the shifts in culture and the influence of popular culture (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006) creating pressure for consumers to adapt to the reality around them in a dynamic, and more importantly, affordable manner (Cachon & Swinney, 2011). Consumers now question their sense of dress and revise their wardrobes at a much more frequent rate, no longer buying a product because they need it.

The uncharacterised nature of the fast fashion model exploits post-modern consumers' desire to construct and reconstruct desired lifestyles and identities (Crane, 2000) through

low-cost and low-effort offerings that sustain consumers' emerging notions of self (Joy, et al., 2012). Barnes and Lea-Greenwood (2006) argue that fast fashion brands prime consumers to frequently visit stores in search of new styles. Moreover, a constant stream of improved, more alluring products mean consumers can make multiple choices, and even multiple mistakes, when they want and with a low-level of perceived risk. This in turn has cultivated a culture of impulse buying, spurring overconsumption where consumers buy more than they need, and encouraging disposability, which results in fashion waste (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013).

Therefore, the consumer's role in redefining fast fashion and consumption practices is of central importance. However, marketing literature does not thoroughly examine the consumer-driven approach to these phenomena. Fast fashion studies have predominantly focused on the supplier, buyer or retailer approach (e.g. Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006; Bruce & Daly, 2006; Cachon & Swinney, 2011) lacking the consumer perspective beyond purchase behaviour and habit (e.g. Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; Gabrielli, Baghi & Codeluppi, 2013). This literature overlooks the meanings assigned to fast fashion that cause such clothing to be so important in consumers' everyday lives.

2.4 Slow Fashion

As the fashion industry is currently being dominated by fast fashion, many brands have abandoned a focus on sustainability in order to remain competitive (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). However, the growing awareness of the drawbacks of the fashion system and the negative impact of consumption has made brands realise that sustainability matters (Moisander & Personen, 2002). While low-cost, trend-led fashion is highly profitable, it also raises a plethora of ethical issues (Aspers & Skov, 2006). Consumers are also beginning to demand fashion that does not harm the environment, or the workers making it (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). Hence, terms such as 'eco', 'green', 'ethical' and 'sustainable' fashion have increasingly been given attention by marketing literature and the media, with the terms often used interchangeably (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013), indicating that the notion of sustainable fashion consumption is broadly applied to a number of contexts and belief systems (Connolly & Shaw, 2006).

Resultantly, the industry has seen the growth of a new movement 'slow fashion', which is an emerging term, concept and process that encompasses the whole range of the phenomena (Ertekin & Atik, 2015). Slow fashion aims to counteract the increasing

demand for fast fashion (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013) and the multitude of environmental and social externalities that afflict the fashion industry, from environmental degradation to violation of workers' rights. This approach to systems change stems from design and sustainability. Slow fashion is not simply a means to slow down production and consumption; it also protects the well-being of the environment, communities and workers (Clark, 2008; Fletcher, 2010; Ertekin & Atik, 2015). Further, slow fashion cultivates a holistic understanding of sustainable fashion consumption by addressing economic, environmental and social issues.

2.4.1 Characteristics of Slow Fashion

The concept of slow fashion was first introduced to international research through the Slow Design Manifesto at the 2006 Milan Slow Design symposium, describing a new approach to producing, appreciating and cultivating quality in fashion (Ertekin & Atik, 2015). As a result, Fletcher (2007) from the Centre for Sustainable Fashion (UK) coined the term 'slow fashion'. The slow fashion movement borrows from the slow food movement, which began in 1986 in Italy as a reaction to the prevalence of a fast food lifestyle (Holt, 2009; Fletcher, 2010). The slow food movement placed importance on increasing knowledge of what consumers purchased and who produced it, and fostered a connection with community through food, cooking and eating in social settings. This was mirrored by consumers' desire to change the homogenised, mass-produced business model that dominated food and consumption at the time (Fletcher, 2010).

Interestingly, the slow fashion movement has not seen the same level of acceptance or cohesiveness at an industry or consumer level. As a relatively new concept in the fashion industry, academics have not agreed on a concise definition that differentiates it from related, existing concepts such as social responsibility or sustainability, from which it has evolved (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). Johansson (2010) suggests the concept is the 'farmers market approach' to fashion, whereby each piece of clothing has a story that consumers can appreciate and connect with. Tran (2008) explains slow fashion comprises clothing of classic silhouettes and neutral colour palettes, produced by skilled, well-paid workers. Holt (2009) defines slow fashion more simplistically: as being the direct opposite of fast fashion. Another key challenge presented in the literature stems from the term itself, with 'slow' seeming to contradict the very nature of fashion, which has now become synonymous with speed and trends. However, it is agreed that the concept does not refer to time (Clark, 2008; Fletcher, 2010) rather like that of the slow food movement,

it emphasises a more holistic approach to sustainable business practices through design, production and sourcing. Some examples of slow fashion brands include Everlane, Kowtow, Reformation and Zady.

A central focus on consumer education encourages individuals to question established worldviews, practices and economic models that underpin fashion, the fashion industry and the fashion system (Fletcher, 2010). Thus, slow fashion offers a more sustainable and ethical way to be 'fashionable' (Clark, 2008), centring on a consumer value system that engages experience and others-orientated values over self-enhancement (Manchiraju & Sadachar, 2014), with consumers holistically considering their consumption behaviours and the potential impact their behaviours can have on environmental and social welfare (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). In this way, slow fashion can create complexity around sustainable choices and sustainable decision-making, requiring consumers to make detailed evaluations of personal and societal benefits (Freestone & McGoldrick, 2008). As there is presently no all-encompassing definition of slow fashion, this study defines slow fashion as a philosophy that promotes attentiveness and mindfulness of various stakeholders' respective needs, and the impact fashion has on its eco-systems, workers, and consumers; encouraging better design, production and consumption (Fletcher, 2010).

2.4.2 Slow Fashion as a Process

Slow fashion envisions a new process for fashion, the fashion industry and the fashion system by representing different values and goals to that of present day (Fletcher, 2010). This requires the fashion industry to view slow fashion as part of a larger framework of economic and societal systems, and incorporate more sustainable business practices from production to consumer as illustrated below in Figure 2.4 (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). Further, it requires consumers to make informed fashion purchase decisions and question the consequences of their consumption behaviours.

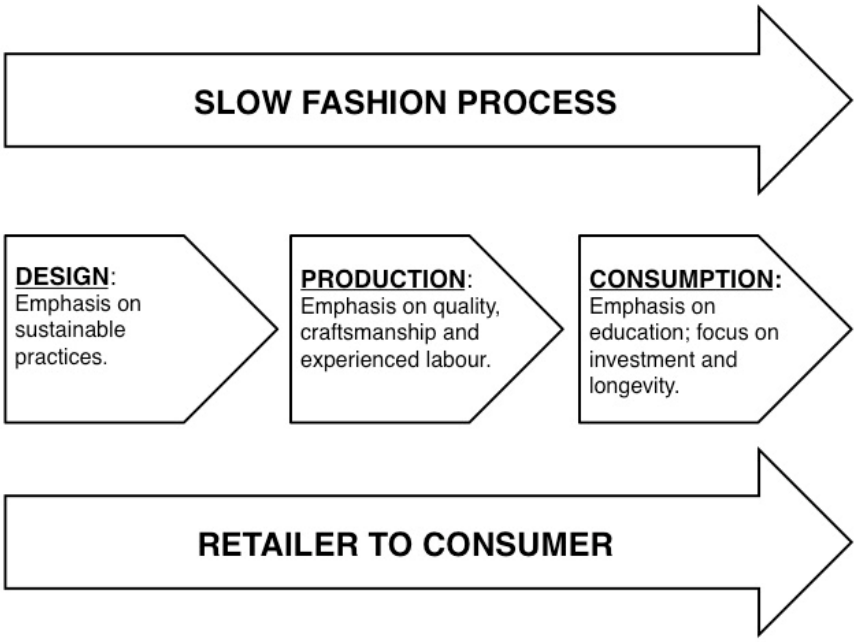

Fig. 2.4 ***Framework Model for the Slow Fashion Process***

Adapted from "Slow fashion movement: Understanding consumer perceptions - An exploratory study," by S. Pookulangara and A. Shephard, 2013, *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 20*, p. 200-206. Copyright 2013 by Elsevier Inc. Adapted with permission.

Slow fashion as a process provides a means to address the lack of sustainability in the fashion industry and fashion system (Johansson, 2010). In terms of design, emphasis is placed on a sustainable process of reflection rather than quickly adapting clothing styles (Gam & Banning, 2011). Often using a cradle-to-cradle concept, consideration is given to all stages of clothing's life cycle, sustainable textiles and how to challenge the constant change fostered by fast fashion. In terms of production, emphasis is placed on clothing quality and manufacturing practices (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). This stage values local resources and economies, ensuring local materials and skills are utilized rather than standardised production, simultaneously preserving the ecological, social and cultural diversity of the area and allowing businesses to thrive economically (Ertekin & Atik, 2015). Finally, transparency in the supply chain and production system allows fashion brands to educate consumers about their production practices and therefore effect change in consumption behaviours. This allows brands and consumers to collaborate and develop meaningful relationships based on co-creation (Ertekin & Atik, 2015), culminating in sustainable and sensorial products with a longer useable life, and are more highly valued as an investment that will remain fashionable beyond the current season (Clark, 2008).

2.4.3 Slow Fashion as Sustainable Fashion Consumption

As illustrated in previous sections, slow fashion is inextricably linked with sustainability. Examining slow fashion and its connection to sustainable consumption, therefore, requires examination of the concept itself. Like slow fashion, sustainable consumption has been subject to a myriad of definitions, meanings and interpretations (e.g. Schaefer & Crane, 2005). The term first entered international research and policy on Agenda 21 at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit as an action plan for sustainable development (Bly, et al., 2015). Here, sustainable consumption comprises more efficiently produced goods, environmental and social concerns, and a 'green' or 'ethical' consumer who uses consumption behaviours to serve as a driving force of industry transformation (Seyfang, 2011). Kilbourne et al. (1997) add that sustainable development and consumption aim to improve quality of life by considering the cost/benefit and well-being trade-offs of ecological, social and generational consequences. Later discourses expanded this conceptualisation to include consistency (McDonough & Braungart, 2002), production of goods that can be composted, recycled or reused; and sufficiency (Princen, 2005), the ability to live better with less. Dolan (2002) was the first to suggest that these interpretations did not incorporate the social and cultural meanings consumers assigned to sustainable consumption. Schaefer and Crane (2005) similarly offer a social and anthropological view, emphasising sustainable consumption as a facilitator of social and cultural expressions. Soron (2010) further proposes that sustainable consumption supports the communication and construction of lifestyles and identities.

Hence, conceptualising what constitutes sustainable fashion consumption proves more problematic as there is no industry standard (Bly, et al., 2015). The concept encompasses many terms such as 'green', 'organic', 'fair-trade', 'eco', 'ethical', 'environmental' and 'sustainable' (Cervellon, Hjerth & Ricard, 2010) each attempting to highlight perceived wrongs of the fashion industry (Blanchard, 2013). Within marketing literature, the terms are used interchangeably causing confusion, complexity and contradictions (Lundblad & Davies, 2016) and resulting in various streams of research that do not allow for consensus. For example, Joergens (2006) uses 'ethical' fashion to describe fashionable clothes that incorporate fair-trade principles, whereas Cervellon and Wernerfelt (2012) use 'green' fashion to describe similar issues.

However, it is clear that sustainable consumption espouses the goals and values of slow fashion, and slow fashion encapsulates the range of terms used to explain sustainable

fashion consumption. Further, sustainable consumption facilitates social and cultural meanings similar to that of fashion consumption. Therefore, this study proposes that fashion, slow fashion and sustainability are concepts, and sustainable fashion consumption through slow fashion clothing is the practice of the phenomena. Conceptualising the phenomena in this way is valuable, as it combines research efforts for a fuller assessment of the complex, related and multiple origins of the environmental and social problems faced by the fashion industry. Moreover, this research allows an examination of consumers as the driving force for sustainable change by uncovering the meanings assigned to fast and slow fashion.

2.4.4 The Importance of Changing from Fast to Slow Fashion

As has been illustrated, the fashion sector has significantly evolved in recent years. The most significant transition was from a push system, where fashion brands dictated trends to consumers, to a pull system, where fashion brands respond to consumer demand (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). This resulted in an industry dominated by fast fashion: a fast-response system of trend-led, low-cost clothing, which by its very nature encourages disposability (Joy, et al., 2012), causing academics, marketing practitioners and consumers to question whether fashion can ever be sustainable (e.g. Johansson, 2010, Fletcher, 2010). The argument is that ubiquitous and permanent fashion production and consumption has negative economic, environmental and social consequences (Biehl-Missal, 2013).

Consequences for Consumer Welfare

Dardis (1974) and Fiske (1989) were among the first academics to explore the implications of fashion consumption on consumer welfare. It is suggested that fast fashion brands thrive on planned obsolescence and creating artificial newness as an ideology of progress, initiating consumers' desire for newness (Fiske, 1989). Consumers buy more to keep up with the trends presented to them, aiming to construct and reconstruct their ideal selves (Crane, 2000). Further, the view of products as links to displaced meaning has been exploited by marketing and advertising as an engine of consumption in postmodern society (McCracken, 1988). The imagery used to depict life and lifestyles similarly perpetuates the desire for change (Ertekin & Atik, 2015). Hence, brands continually refresh offerings to provide consumers with instant gratification and take advantage of consumers' evolving identities. Subsequent ethical concerns arise from fast fashion brands perpetuating the recreation of such insatiable desires, as fashion brands place

importance on their own economic well-being over consumers' economic, emotional, intellectual and spiritual well-being.

Consequences for Environmental Welfare

Continually providing new offerings to consumers means fast fashion brands compromise on quality, and deliberately produce styles that will quickly degrade and go out of fashion; another cause of overconsumption (Byun & Sternquist, 2008). Consumers are not only increasingly consuming fashion, but also increasingly disposing of fashion (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009), resulting in fashion waste (Johansson, 2010). In 2015, the consumption of clothing reached around 73 billion kilograms (Fashion Revolution, 2015) with over 40% of purchased clothing never being worn (Greenpeace, 2016). As a result, three out of four items of purchased clothing end up in landfills or incinerated (Greenpeace, 2016) and only 20% recycled (Fashion Revolution, 2015). This is one of the leading causes of environmental degradation (McRobbie, 1997), and is expected to increase at a minimum of 4% annually until 2025. Unsustainable manufacturing and production processes are another cause of environmental degradation (Cline, 2012). Cotton accounts for 90% of all natural fibres used in clothing, and are used in 40% of clothing manufactured globally (Fashion Revolution, 2015). The production of one cotton shirt alone uses 2,700 litres of water. Consequently, the Aral Sea has shrunk 10% in volume partly due to conventional cotton farming and clothing production practises. Further, 20% of industrial water waste comes from textile dyeing and treatment, with an estimated 8,000 synthetic chemicals used and released into fresh water sources.

Consequences for Worker Welfare

The chemicals used in farming and production practises are another acute concern, causing workers worldwide to suffer from poisoning (Fashion Revolution, 2015). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environmental Programme and the World Health Organization, one million workers are hospitalised as a result every year. However, many of these workers have no other choice but to continue working in such conditions, lending to systematic exploitation of human rights (McRobbie, 1997) including child labour, discrimination and repression (Fashion Revolution, 2015). Workers face excessive hours, exhaustion, forced overtime, poor health, unclean and unsafe working conditions, and denial of other basic human rights whilst working. Industrial accidents such as the collapse of the Rana Plaza garment factory in Bangladesh, which killed more than 1,100 workers, serve as

tragic examples of the outcomes of non-existent health and safety measures and poor working conditions (Pedersen & Andersen, 2015).

Slow Fashion as a Facilitator of Systems Change

These examples illustrate only a few of the environmental and social issues stemming from the current state of the fashion industry. Other issues include modern slavery, wages, transparency, traceability and loss of culture and skills (Fashion Revolution, 2015). Due to the scale and complexity of the fashion industry, much remains hidden. Consumers do not have a clear picture of how the fashion process really works, from fibre, to product, to disposal. More alarmingly, many brands do not disclose their direct suppliers or even know where their inputs are coming from. The multitude of environmental and social externalities arising from fast fashion indicate that changes in the fashion industry are desperately needed. However, fast fashion giants such as Zara and H&M make it seem unlikely that the fast fashion model will disappear in the near future (Tran, 2008).

The Centre for Sustainable Fashion (UK) proposes that there are three ways slow fashion can facilitate change: first, building a new fashion system through discussion, sustainable design and dissemination of knowledge; second, promoting well-being by developing more sustainable production, improving education and examining fashion's role in culture; and third, encouraging transparency, embracing change, developing assessment of production practices, and evaluating the cost of production to environment and society (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). As slow fashion presents an opportunity to alleviate the strain caused on environmental and social welfare by fast fashion, research is needed (Bly, et al., 2015; McNeill & Moore, 2015). This study aims to help facilitate change by understanding the meanings that consumers assign to fast and slow fashion that may encourage or prohibit sustainable fashion consumption.

2.4.5 Slow Fashion and the Consumer

Researchers such as Joy et al. (2012) suggest that fast fashion has seduced consumers with the transient thrills of cheap imitations of high-end styles. However, consumers are beginning to demand fashion that does not harm the environment, or the workers making it (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). Consumers are also becoming aware of the impact individual consumption can have on society (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). However, slow fashion has not experienced rapid dissemination compared to fast fashion. Despite this concern, consumers are reluctant to uptake slow fashion or sustainable fashion

consumption (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). Similarly, most brands have not responded to the new socio-cultural shifts such as the positive attitudes toward sustainable fashion consumption. This is due to the profitability of the fast fashion industry, which is inhibiting industry-wide movement toward sustainability, legitimising unethical production in the marketplace and fostering unsustainable fashion consumption behaviours by consumers (McNeill & Moore, 2015).

Thus, challenging the consumption-orientated dominant social paradigm requires sacrifices and transformation of institutions from both consumers and fashion brands (Kilbourne, et al., 1997). Early attempts to address sustainability took an operational approach, examining manufacturing efficiency and environmentally friendly production processes (Rothenberg, 2007). Despite efforts in these areas, increasing consumption rates have counteracted much of the progress made. Hence, addressing issues through examining consumer consumption is necessary. Past research into the sustainability, sustainable consumption and sustainable fashion consumption research domain predominantly focuses on identifying the 'green', 'ethical' or 'sustainable' consumer (e.g. Shrum, McCarty & Lowrey, 1995). While there is no consensus on a definition (Kilbourne, Beckmann & Thelen, 2002) a central theme suggests such consumers consider the environment to be important, and evaluate consumption practices accordingly (Connolly & Shaw, 2006). Conversely, consumers who do not take the environment into account are thought to believe sustainability issues are not their responsibility and are out of their control (Banerjee & McKeage, 1994). As a result, research has offered many views and strategies that are used by 'green', 'ethical' or 'sustainable' fashion consumers (i.e. upcycling, second-hand shopping, anti-consumption) in order to encourage 'normal' consumers to adopt such behaviours (e.g. Bly, et al., 2015).

An alternative view suggests that it is not easy to adopt an extreme environmentalist approach in an increasingly convenience-driven and consumption-orientated society (e.g. Moisander, 2007), as reflected by the dominant social paradigm (Kilbourne, et al., 1997). From this view, sustainable consumption and sustainable fashion consumption can be viewed more liberally (Moisander, 2007). While it does require consumers to select products that are the least harmful to the environment and society, it makes it possible to be positively impactful without radically compromising one's lifestyle. Surprisingly, marketing literature has rarely examined 'normal' consumers and their experiences with

slow fashion or sustainable fashion consumption (Johnstone & Tan, 2015; Johnstone & Hooper, 2016). As there is clearly a tension between the allure of fast fashion and concern for environmental and social welfare, these consumers might offer rich insight into the adoption of sustainable fashion consumption behaviour. This study proposes that all consumers, rather than just 'green', 'ethical' or 'sustainable' consumers, have the potential to engage in sustainable fashion consumption (Young, et al., 2010), which is a particularly important perspective for effecting wider change.

Previous research has suggested that like fashion consumption, sustainable consumption is closely linked to the formation and reinforcement of self (Bly, et al., 2015), with slow fashion bridging the two phenomena. Individuals also consume slow fashion to construct and reconstruct desired lifestyles and identities (Crane, 2000). Joy et al. (2012) suggest that unlike fast fashion where consumers sustain evolving selves with evolving fashion styles, reinvention of self with slow fashion can serve as a means to disenchant consumers with unsustainable consumption by revealing its potential harm to others and the environment (Elsie, 2003; Beard, 2008). However, the majority of consumers currently continue to ignore environmental and social issues (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). Consumers continue to purchase fashion for personal rather than environmental or social reasons. For example, the need to portray a certain identity can outweigh the drivers to be ethical or consume sustainably (McNeill & Moore, 2015). Further, the desire to consume alongside efforts to reduce or limit consumption presents a paradox. Therefore, the consumer's role in redefining slow fashion and consumption practices is of central importance. However, marketing literature does not thoroughly examine the consumer-driven approach to these phenomena. The discrepancy between attitudes and behaviour signifies that the meanings assigned to fast and slow fashion must be playing an important role in determining sustainable fashion consumption, which this study seeks to understand.

2.5 The Attitude-Behaviour Gap

Every consumer fashion purchase decision has an impact on sustainability, whether that is through environmental or social implications (Young, et al., 2010). Such issues are continuing to gain attention from consumers, however a disparity between what consumers know, think, feel, believe, intend to do and actually do, is evident (Belk, Devinney, & Eckhardt, 2005). The fundamental challenge in the sustainable fashion consumption research domain is this disparity between consumers' sustainable attitudes

and actual behaviour, termed the attitude-behaviour gap (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). Despite consumers expressing sentiment towards environmental and social welfare, research indicates that consumers struggle to translate these attitudes into consumption practices (e.g. Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Chatzidakis, Hibbert & Smith, 2007; Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008; Gupta & Ogden, 2009; Johnstone & Tan, 2015; Johnstone & Hooper, 2016).

Numerous theoretical frameworks have sought to account for this gap, yet no definitive explanation has been found (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Johnstone & Tan, 2015). Therefore, the attitude-behaviour gap remains a key area of concern for social marketers and policymakers because consumers' fashion consumption behaviour remains predominantly unsustainable (Johnstone & Tan, 2015). This, in turn, makes research into the gap of critical importance, as it offers insight into understanding, predicting and influencing sustainable fashion consumption behaviour. The phenomenon has been widely applied to 'ethical', 'green' and 'sustainable' consumerism and consumption, yet there is still very little understanding of how and why it occurs (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Carrington, et al., 2010).

The lack of consensus in the attitude-behaviour gap literature is often attributed to two broad perspectives: those who believe the gap is principally associated with empirical issues, and those who believe the gap is derived from some form of cognitive source (Davies, Lee & Ahonhhan, 2012; Shaw, McMaster & Newholm, 2016). This study proposes that contribution through broadening and deepening the analysis of cognitive and social factors in decision-making is necessary. However, empirical limitations are also present in this stream of research due to a focus on quantitative research design and rational decision-making. Therefore, a new approach by understanding 'normal' consumers and the meanings they assign to both fast and slow fashion may provide new insight into the attitude-behaviour gap and sustainable fashion behaviour change.

2.5.1 Traditional Approaches to Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviour

Research originally theorised that increased knowledge about environmental and social issues would result in more positive attitudes toward sustainable consumption (Monroe, 2003; Nolan, 2010). It was expected that, in turn, positive attitudes would translate to sustainable consumption behaviours. Consequently, many social marketing campaigns have sought to induce change through creating consumer awareness (Bly, et al., 2015).

Despite consumers being regularly exposed to such messages, this does not necessarily lead to behaviour change (Johnstone & Hooper, 2016). Therefore, the assumed knowledge-attitude-behaviour model that underlies most research settings (Miller, n.d.) is limited in its application to sustainable consumption, as such complex behaviours do not result from a linear relationship.

The relationship between attitudes and behaviour is equally as contentious (Johnstone & Tan, 2015). An attitude can be defined as a set of enduring beliefs about an object that cause individuals to behave in a certain way towards the object (Weigel, 1983). Attitudes are recognised as being one of the greatest influences and predictors of behaviours that are not constrained by personal capabilities or context (Stern, 2000), including sustainable consumption behaviour (Weigel, 1983). Multi-attribute models such as the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985, 1991) theorise that attitude correlates with affect intentions to perform behaviour, with intentions impacting actual behaviour (Petty, Unnava & Strathman, 1991). Therefore, these models are frequently used to measure the correlation between attitudes, intention and behaviour.

Where sustainable decisions are considered in relation to such models, research has tried to further understand the link between ethical or sustainable principles and behavioural factors (e.g. Rest, 1986; Jones, 1991). This research identified weak linkages between attitudes and consumption behaviour in sustainable consumption marketing literature (e.g. Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008; Bray, Johns & Kilburn, 2011; Moraes, Carrigan & Szmigin, 2012; Johnstone & Tan, 2016) suggesting sustainable attitudes do not consistently correlate with, or predict, sustainable behaviour (e.g. Tanner, 1999; Jurin & Fortner, 2002). For example, Folkes and Kamins (1999) identified that only 20% of consumers who professed environmental concern purchased a sustainable offering within the previous year. In addition, intention proved an inadequate predictor of actual sustainable consumption behaviour. For example, Futerra (2005) found that 30% of consumers stated sustainable intentions, yet only 3% committed to actual sustainable consumption behaviour. This suggests that these multi-attribute models are consistently inaccurate in predicting actual sustainable consumption behaviour.

2.5.2 Limitations of Traditional Approaches to Explore the Attitude-Behaviour Gap

As has been suggested, multi-attribute models that expect sustainable attitudes and behavioural intentions to directly result in sustainable consumption practices are often inaccurate. Researchers such as Carrigan and Attalla (2001) and Auger and Devinney (2007) propose one key limitation stems from methodological approaches. Traditional studies have used quantitative, self-reported survey methods to assess consumer purchase intentions and subsequent behaviour. As a result, responses often appear to be similar but are founded on a multitude of meanings and concerns (i.e. environmental degradation, fashion waste, working conditions) that cannot be explored in-depth by quantitative research inquiry (Szmigin, Carrigan & McEachem, 2009). Further, such methods can overstate the importance of environmental and social issues and their influence on purchase intention (Johnstone & Tan, 2015). Likewise, consumers may overstate their attitudinal preferences and purchase intentions toward sustainable consumption behaviour when responding to sustainability issues in order to appear socially responsible (e.g. Hiller, 2010). Resultantly, social desirability bias is considered prominent in such sustainability, sustainable consumption and sustainable fashion consumption research (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001), therefore partially distorting findings (Johnstone & Tan, 2016). While quantitative inquiry has significantly contributed to sustainable consumerism and consumption literature, limitations give cause for qualitative research in this domain.

Researchers such as Carrington, et al. (2010) suggest that research design and social desirability bias only partially contribute to the gap between sustainable attitudes and sustainable behaviour. Multi-attribute models of consumer choice inhibit understanding of sustainable fashion consumption as they focus on rational decision-making processes. Sustainable fashion consumption is highly complex. Therefore, viewing consumers as rational decision-makers and relying on structured, linear relationships between constructs is limiting.

Studies have shown that knowledge does not necessarily separate those who engage in sustainable consumption from those who do not (Monroe, 2003). Individuals with a great deal of knowledge about environmental and social issues, and likewise those who do not, may equally fail to engage in sustainable consumption. Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002) argue that consumers already possess sufficient knowledge about environmental and

social issues to consume knowledge to make sustainable consumption decisions. Kozinets (2001) proposes that this is not so clear-cut, as consumer knowledge has been linked to information overload, causing consumers to feel overwhelmed and therefore unable to act. Beck (1998) refers to this knowledge conundrum as our 'inability to know', whereby excessive information, often of a conflicting nature, prompts confusion and tension over the proper course of action. Hence, consumers trade-off sustainable fashion consumption behaviour due to a multitude of personal and social reasons (Caruana, 2007; Johnstone & Hooper, 2016; Shaw, et al., 2016). Therefore, Bray, et al. (2011) suggest rational decision-making models are inadequate in representing contexts where sustainability may be secondary to other factors, and are better suited to decision making in a general sense, rather than specifically concerned with consumption. While knowledge and attitude play an important role in sustainable fashion consumption behaviours, they alone cannot account for it.

In addition, Carrington et al. (2010) highlight a gap between attitudes and intention, and a gap between intention and actual behaviour. Many empirical studies have identified a discrepancy between positive attitudes toward sustainable consumption, and intention to commit to sustainable consumption behaviour (e.g. Chatzidakis, et al., 2007; Young, et al., 2010). Similarly, a smaller stream of empirical studies has identified a discrepancy between intention to commit to sustainable consumption, and actual commitment to sustainable consumption behaviour (e.g. Carrington, et al., 2010). Hence, consumers' intention cannot be reliably used as an assurance of actual behaviour. This is because consumers interact with physical and social environments during the translation between intention and actual behaviour. Multi-attribute models isolate decision-making from the effect of external contexts and other cognitive factors (Shaw, et al., 2016), which may mediate relationships. Such variables cannot be ignored if the attitude-behaviour gap phenomenon is to be understood. Therefore, while rational decision-making models have significantly contributed to sustainable consumerism and consumption literature, limitations give cause for additional cognitive factors to be explored in this research domain.

2.5.3 Alternative Approaches to Explore the Attitude-Behaviour Gap

Limitations of traditional approaches to knowledge, attitudes and behaviour and inconsistencies in the extant attitude-behaviour gap literature indicated to researchers that something more complex was occurring. Pioneering research began to examine a range

of variables that could be used to explain, predict and influence sustainable consumption behaviours. Such studies predominantly focus on individual factors identifying the 'ethical', or 'green' consumer (e.g. Shrum, et al., 1995; Roberts, 1996) and their characteristics such as personalities (e.g. Balderjahn, 1988) and socio-demographic and psychographic terms (e.g. Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch, Sinkovics & Bohlen, 2003; Gilg, Barr & Ford, 2005; do Paço, Raposo & Filho, 2009). However, these studies have had limited success in explaining environmental and social concern, and are in fact poor indicators of sustainable consumption behaviour (Davidson & Freudenburg, 1996; Agarwal, 2000), concluding that the underlying determinants of sustainable consumption behaviour are quite unrelated to consumer characteristics (Pettit & Sheppard, 1992). Further, the findings of this research provide a complex overview of consumers who already engage in sustainable consumption. This narrows the scope of sustainable consumption to a niche concept and niche consumers, when research should also consider the wider group of 'normal' consumers in order to challenge the current consumption paradigm.

A second stream of research focuses its attention on situational factors that create barriers to sustainable consumption practices, such as financial and temporal resources, lack of choice and availability (e.g. Gleim, Smith, Andrews & Cronin, 2013), quality, perceived performance and trust (e.g. Gupta & Ogden, 2009; Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008). Interestingly, financial and temporal factors seem to remain somewhat consistent throughout research. That is, these factors tend to surface throughout studies to strengthen or counteract sustainable consumption behaviour. It is the individual consumer's response or their group's response to situational factors that seems to shift. Therefore, this suggests that there is an unaccounted for cognitive and/or social factor or process mediating characteristics, situational factors, attitudes and behaviour.

A third stream of research seeks to better explain internal factors that cause consumers to engage in sustainable consumption. These factors include, but are not limited to, responsibility, locus of control, willingness to commit, beliefs, attitudes, neutralisation techniques, group membership, ethical standards and social pressure, motivations and perceptions, and active caring and altruism (e.g. Stern, 2000; Chatzidakis, et al., 2007; Johnstone & Tan, 2015; Johnstone & Hooper, 2016; Shaw, et al., 2016). In relation to sustainable fashion consumption, other key studies have examined slow fashion decision processes (e.g. Watson & Yan, 2013), slow fashion perceptions (e.g. Pookulangara &

Shephard, 2013), sustainable fashion attitudes (e.g. McNeill & Moore, 2015), sustainable fashion motivations (e.g. Bly, et al., 2015; Lundblad & Davies, 2016), and sustainable fashion values (e.g. Lundblad & Davies, 2016), yet no studies have specifically used these constructs to explore the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption. Thus, no single or general construct has been identified as a consistent predictor of sustainable fashion consumption, and as a result there is little explanation of why some constructs are successful and others are not (Darner, 2009). Further, few studies have applied the phenomenon to slow fashion; have predominantly focused on 'green' consumers, rather than 'normal' consumers; and therefore, have not accounted for the presence of both fast and slow fashion in consumers' lives and its contribution to the gap. This study proposes that there is value in exploring an additional alternative approach to understanding the phenomenon.

There are many factors involved in consumers' decisions to engage in sustainable fashion consumption. Faced with such complex phenomena, it is not surprising that there is variability in consumers' consumption behaviours and in extant literature. While past research has revealed a plethora of variables that explain why consumers may or may not choose not to engage in sustainable consumption, there is still an incomplete understanding of the attitude-behaviour gap (Johnstone & Tan, 2015; Johnstone & Hooper, 2016). Why do consumers express concern for environmental and social welfare, and then choose not to engage in sustainable fashion consumption? Is there a factor or process mediating the relationship between the constructs of the attitude-behaviour gap phenomenon? Few studies have examined the deeper, underlying cognitive or social factors that are involved in such decision-making, which may be playing an important role in facilitating or impeding sustainable fashion consumption, such as meaning. Meaning will be explored in the following section.

Traditional approaches have oversimplified the complex process of attitudes translating to intention and, in turn, actual behaviour. The prevalent use of quantitative research design has limited understanding of sustainable fashion consumption due to a focus on rational decision-making processes (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Auger & Devinney, 2007; Carrington, et al., 2010; Johnstone & Tan, 2015; Johnstone & Hooper, 2016; Shaw, et al., 2016). However, use of qualitative research and interpretivist inquiry is able to reveal the underlying meanings, and actual attitudes and behaviours of 'normal' fashion consumers (e.g. Bly, et al., 2015; Johnstone & Tan, 2015). Further, as sustainable fashion

consumption behaviour involves numerous personal and social reasons (Caruana, 2007; Johnstone & Hooper, 2016) such an approach is deemed necessary to provide an in-depth view of the phenomenon.

2.6 Meaning

This study proposes that contribution into the attitude-behaviour gap by broadening and deepening the understanding of cognitive and social factors is necessary. Thus, particular attention must be given to consumer culture, and how meaning impacts sustainable fashion consumption. As this study defines fashion as the symbolic and cultural meanings that clothing possesses, in particular, the ways consumers use clothing to express identity, social status and belonging (Pan, et al., 2015), research needs to delve into the meanings attached to throwaways (fast fashion) compared with enduring fashion (slow fashion). Delving into how consumers assign meaning to their purchase and possession of clothing will provide rich insight into the attitude-behaviour gap contradiction by understanding which factors may facilitate or impede sustainable fashion consumption. A review of extant literature revealed that of the few studies that have examined the deeper, underlying cognitive or social factors that are involved in such decision-making, none explored the meanings consumers attach to fast or slow fashion or sustainable fashion consumption. Notions of meaning are widely acknowledged throughout fashion, consumption, sustainability, sustainable consumption, sustainable fashion consumption, fast fashion and slow fashion literature, yet are seldom described, defined or analysed beyond noting their existence.

Resultantly, literature in this domain has been criticised for its disconnection from socio-cultural processes (e.g. Dolan, 2002). Consumers engage in consumption that has distinct symbolic and cultural meaningfulness that has been overlooked in sustainable fashion consumption research (Dolan, 2002). As consumption is inherently linked with social meaning and values, and products, such as clothing, act as signifiers of social relationships and cultural allegiance (Seyfang, 2004) research has called for a paradigm shift in the values of consumption to address sustainability issues (Kilbourne, et al., 1997; Dolan, 2002). Thus, shifting values requires an understanding of the role of consumption. This study proposes that examining sustainable fashion consumption through the meanings consumers assign to fast and slow fashion will achieve this understanding, and therefore help marketing academics and practitioners alike to understand, predict, and influence sustainable behaviour.

2.6.1 Meaning of Products

Levy (1959) was one of the founding authors of symbolic meaning in consumer behaviour research. He regards products as 'symbols for sale'; whereby a product contains symbolic meaning that meshes to, adds to and reinforces the way consumers view themselves. From this perspective, the functional value of a product is amplified by the symbolic value of a product. Further, symbolic value allows consumers to make decisions with less conflict, whether routinely or impulsively, because the chosen product will be more symbolically harmonious with their goals and self-definitions than the alternative products considered. McCracken (1986) builds upon these foundations by conceptualising the transfer of such symbolic meaning. Similarly, products are acknowledged to have a symbolic significance beyond functional value. From this perspective, products and their ability to carry and communicate cultural meaning is also incorporated.

Thus, it can be understood that products gain meaning not only from their tangible attributes, but also their symbolic interpretation of society and culture (Levy, 1959; McCracken, 1988; Mick & Buhl, 1992). Products are thought to possess three broad sets of values: utilitarian, hedonic, and symbolic and cultural. Utilitarian value stems from a product's function and ability to resolve a consumer need or problem (e.g. Fournier, 1991, 1998). Hedonic, or experiential, value centres on sensory pleasure and the arousal of emotion such as enjoyment and entertainment (e.g. Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994). Symbolic value, as aforementioned, stems from an alignment with one's sense of self and social environment (e.g. Levy, 1959; Sirgy, 1982; Belk, 1988; Fournier, 1998; McCracken, 1988).

Individuals draw on these values when they engage in consumption. However, this present study focuses on the symbolic and cultural value of fashion products, that is fast and slow fashion, as consumers exhibit uncertainty towards sustainable fashion consumption. This is because consumers use products to convey their notions of self, demonstrate social connections, and attain and maintain lifestyles (McCracken, 1988; Crane, 2000). In particular, clothing is constantly on display (Berger & Heath, 2007) being used to emanate meanings about the wearer to others and to reinforce those meanings to oneself (Belk, 1988). As illustrated in previous sections, consumers use fashion, both fast and slow, to construct and reconstruct desired lifestyles and identities (Crane, 2000) that fit within the boundaries of social norms (Murray, 2002). Such symbolic meanings are recognised as having a significant impact on consumers'

consumption behaviours (Levy, 1959; Solomon, 1983), including the context of sustainable fashion consumption. Focusing on meaning, then, is valuable as consumers' behaviour towards products is largely ascribed to this phenomenon (Kleine & Kernan, 1991), with selection and usage of products, including clothing, based on the meanings they possess.

2.6.2 Meaning of Consumption

Researchers such as Wright and Snow (1980) and Wattansuwan (2005) characterise consumption as an essential practice of modern life. As well as serving utilitarian function, consumption acts develop and manage the meaning of products. In terms of this study, fashion influences consumption, and consumption influences fashion (Kawamura, 2005). Hence, fashion plays an essential role in shaping consumers' consumption practices, with meaning assigned to the acts and contexts of consuming fashion (Sassatelli, 2007). Previous sections have revealed that fashion is a system of meanings (Barthes, 1983; McCracken, 1986, 1988) that consists of all the organisations and individuals involved in creating and transferring symbolic meaning to cultural goods. McCracken (1986, 1988) describes the fashion system as one of the key modes of creation and movement of cultural meaning.

Such meaning allows consumers to learn how to wear clothing and convey personal meaning, as well as learn how to wear clothing in specific social and cultural contexts and convey collective meaning, as each context has different meanings (Barthes, 1983). Hence, consumers can be considered one of the key facilitators in the creation and transfer of meaning. Consumers actively create and co-create symbolic meaning through their appropriation of products, rather than being passive recipients (Scott, 1993, 1994; Ritson & Elliott, 1995), with this meaning influencing decision-making outcomes and behaviours. Consumers take the symbolic and cultural meanings products possess, and use the meanings in the construction of their self and world (McCracken, 1986). To do this, consumers must engage in consumption of products (Belk, 1988; McCracken, 1988), such as clothing. However, consumers are continuously engaged in interpretive dialogue during the appropriation of symbolic and cultural meanings, which changes their localised knowledge and value systems (Ertekin & Atik, 2015). Such reworking is influenced by consumers desire to fulfil the self through fashion discourses (Thompson & Haytko, 1997).

Therefore, fast and slow fashion is not consumed to simply satisfy basic needs, rather to achieve a range of other objectives such as symbolic self-completion, distinction and adaptation (Jackson, 2005). Consumption is a highly social function, through which social relationships are expressed (Schaefer & Crane, 2005). Consumption is not only used to communicate with others or emanate meanings to others (McCracken, 1986; Belk, 1988), but also to receive messages from others (Appadurai, 1986). Acts of consumption, then, are deliberate actions consumers engage in due to the key inferences drawn from the products individuals carefully choose to consume (Schaefer & Crane, 2005). Thus, consumption imposes mobility on distinctive social signs, and is a status and symbolic strategy (Baudrillard, 1981, 1993), whereby consumers make their social and cultural differences visible (Dolan, 2002).

2.6.3 Self-identity

Individuals consume products in ways that are consistent with their sense of self (Levy, 1959; Sirgy, 1982; McCracken, 1986, 1988; Belk, 1988). In fact, consumer products can be viewed as an extension of self, used to construct consumers' social world and their place in it (Belk, 1988). This is due to the symbolic meanings that products carry and communicate, and how consumers use these meanings to create, develop and foster their identities. The act of consuming products, then, is a means of investing one's self in products. In turn, symbolic value is drawn from consumption experiences and associated with certain products (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Holbrook, 1994) such as fast and slow fashion. Research has shown that such meaning acts as a determinant of consumption behaviour (Levy, 1959; Solomon, 1983), with the influence of self-image and identity being independent from the influence of attitudes and behaviour (Sparks & Shepherd, 1992).

Thus, an important underlying assumption of this present research study is that the self, self-identity and self-concept will be primary motivators of sustainable fashion consumption (Stets & Burke, 2002), as the drive to convey one's self is inextricably linked with the act of consumption (Elliott, 1997). While many studies have illuminated the link between identity and behaviour (e.g. Stets & Burke, 2002), this study proposes that such meanings or the way they are used will differ between fast and slow fashion consumption, which has not been examined. Developing an understanding of the meaning consumers assign to fast and slow fashion is valuable in identifying what meanings consumers desire in the products they consume. Moreover, it will allow for an

understanding of why consumers do or do not engage in sustainable consumption behaviours, and how these meanings can potentially be used to promote sustainable practices.

2.6.4 Social Identity

McCracken (1986) suggests consumers' self-identity of unique, individual life experiences forms their lens of interpretation. This lens is then used to understand shared cultural viewpoints. Hence, consumption is an individual experience as well as a social experience (Caru & Cova, 2003). Individuals attribute meaning to their world, and then meaning is socially constructed, providing a blueprint that specifies behaviour (McCracken, 1986). Thus, the favourability of sustainable fashion consumption depends not only on consumers' particular aims and desired individual identity, but also their cultural background, social environment and commitment to others' needs (Cherrier, 2007). Due to such commitments, consumers may at times negotiate their personal values and sense of self-identity (Connolly & Prothero, 2008). This suggests consumption is based on both internal and external influences, that is, a self-identity and a social or collective identity.

Social identity comprises aspects of consumers' self-concept that stem from the social categories to which they belong (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Johnstone & Hooper, 2016). Consumers similarly seek to construct their social identity through consumption, guided by a collection of social practices, including social influences, social norms, and societal structures and institutions (Jackson, 2005). Such social practices within a specific market in which consumption takes place are central to creating engagement in consumption (Shaw & Riach, 2011), affecting consumers' ability to set parameters around their own sustainable consumption practice. This is because consumers are not simply reactive in their social systems; rather they are producers and products of their social systems (Bandura, 1986, 2001; Johnstone & Hooper, 2016). Social learning theory (Bandura, 1969) offers the idea that consumers learn behaviour through observing others around them, and subsequently imitating their behaviours. In addition, social influences and underlying subjective norms impact consumers directly by imposing the expectations of others (Bagozzi & Lee, 2012). Consumers learn what social categories they belong to and to evaluate their performance relative to others in that social category (Robboy & Clark, 1983). Sustainable fashion consumption, then, is also shaped by consumers' social interaction and conformity to behaviour that is deemed appropriate or desirable.

Therefore, the self develops not only as an individual process, but also as a social experience (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Johnstone & Hooper, 2016). This study proposes that consumers will assign meaning to fast and slow fashion that relates to both their self-identity and social identity. This study also proposes that as a result, consumers will consider personal and social trade-offs, and subsequently personal and societal trade-offs that impact environmental and social welfare, and make concessions in order to maintain their desired identities.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter first reviewed fashion, fast fashion and slow fashion literature, revealing business models that encourage continuous consumption currently dominate the contemporary fashion system. The rise of fast fashion has spurred widespread adoption of unsustainable production practices. Environmental and social externalities have sparked academic, industry and consumer interest in sustainability, and the new movement slow fashion. As slow fashion presents an opportunity to alleviate the strain on environmental and social welfare and facilitate systems change, research is needed.

The consumer's role in redefining fast fashion and consumption practices is of central importance. However, the tension between the allure of fast fashion and consumers' concern for environmental and social welfare manifests in inconsistent attitudes and consumption behaviour, representing a significant threat to the future of sustainable fashion. Subsequent analysis of the phenomenon identified key empirical and theoretical limitations and gaps in existing research. Previous literature that has attempted to explain the attitude-behaviour gap has not accounted for the symbolic and cultural meaning consumers assign to fashion products in the acts of consuming them. As the complexity of sustainable fashion consumption choices reflects a complicated process of decision-making, an alternative approach to exploring the phenomenon by understanding such meaning is deemed necessary. This study proposes meaning will predominantly stem from individuals' need to consume in a way that is congruent with their sense of self, therefore requiring a more granular approach to understand the relationship between identity concerns and its effect on sustainable fashion consumption behaviour.

Therefore, this present research study aims to provide further insight into the attitude-behaviour gap by understanding the meanings consumers attach to fast and slow fashion, particularly those related to self-identity and social identity, as well as the personal and

societal trade-offs consumers consider, and how this reconciles with consumers' belief systems. The following chapter sets out the methodology that has been adopted by this study to explore such questions.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter, Literature Review, provided a comprehensive review of the relevant literature used to inform and support this study. This revealed that the tension between the allure of fast fashion and consumers' concern for environmental and social welfare manifests in inconsistent attitudes and consumption behaviour, representing a significant threat to the future of sustainable fashion. Key empirical and theoretical limitations and gaps in the existing attitude-behaviour gap research highlight that an alternative research approach is necessary. This study proposes that the attitude-behaviour gap can be further explored by understanding the meanings consumers attach to both fast and slow fashion.

This chapter explains the logic that determined the research decisions and methodological framework of this study. First, the purpose of the study is outlined. Next, the researcher's paradigmatic assumptions are explained to illustrate subsequent theoretical and methodological decisions. Data collection and data analysis procedures are then outlined. Finally, the principles used to establish trustworthiness and authenticity of this study are explained.

3.2 Research Purpose

This research study aims to explore the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption by understanding the meanings consumers attach to fast and slow fashion, and how this can provide benefit to marketing academics and practitioners. The study poses four research questions:

RQ1. What meanings do consumers attach to fast and slow fashion?

RQ2. What do these meanings articulate?

RQ3. What are the personal and societal trade-offs consumers consider when adopting sustainable fashion behaviours?

RQ4. How do these meanings and articulations reconcile with consumers' personal belief systems?

3.3 Research Approach

In order to fulfil the research purpose and answer the research questions posed, the researcher gave careful consideration to their assumptions about reality and knowledge (Crotty, 1998). These assumptions were used to guide the researcher's philosophical viewpoints and the research decisions made. Four key elements informed the research process: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and method. Epistemology is a way one looks at the world and makes sense of it, involving knowledge and understanding. Theoretical perspective is the philosophical stance that informs the methodology. Methodology is a design and strategy that shapes method choice, linking back to the study's desired research outcomes. Finally, method is the technique used to gather and analyse data. Figure 3.1 illustrates the elements as applied to this study. Each element will be discussed in turn.

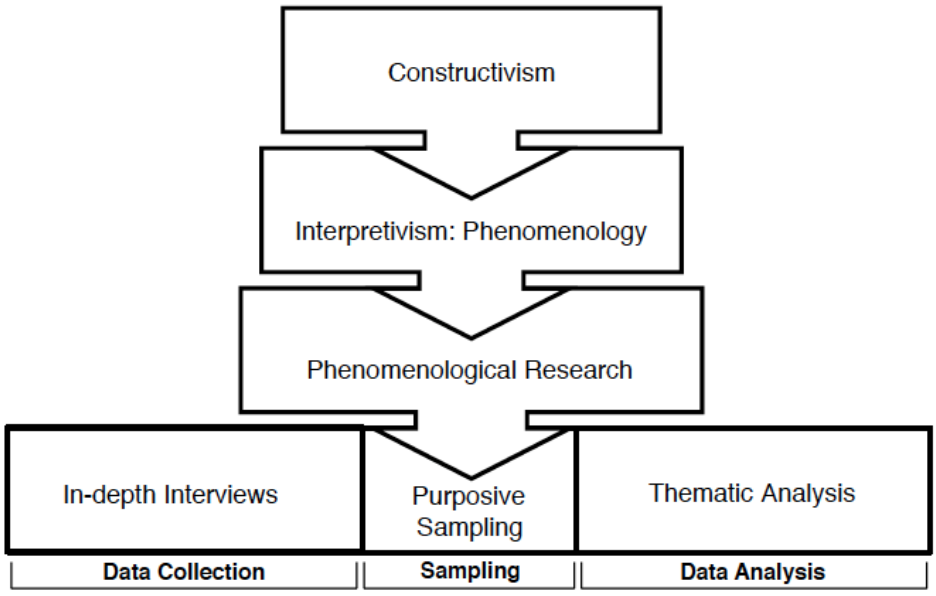

Fig. 3.1 ***Philosophical Viewpoints and Methodological Choice***

Adapted from "The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process," by M. Crotty, 1998. Copyright 1998 by Allen & Unwin. Adapted with permission.

3.3.1 Epistemology

Epistemology provides a philosophical grounding that decides what kinds of knowledge are possible, ensuring that they are adequate and legitimate (Crotty, 1998). Further, it comprises both the researcher's own beliefs, and the beliefs about the relationship between researcher and participant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). In this study, the researcher's epistemology can be described as constructivism.

Constructivism assumes all knowledge and meaningful reality is based on human practices, constructed by people's interactions with objects and their world, and then transferred within an essentially social context (Crotty, 1998; Creswell, 2013). Constructivism is concerned with understanding how the world appears to individuals, and why individuals interpret phenomenon in particular ways. Individuals do not discover knowledge or meaning; rather they construct it based on their beliefs and experiences (Crotty, 1998). The world and objects by themselves can be considered meaningless, yet they are people's partners in the generation of meaning (Heidegger, 1949; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Crotty, 1998). This lends to the concept of intentionality, whereby the mind becomes conscious of something, and reaches out to and into the object (Brentano, 1973). Consciousness, then, must be intentional (Fish, 1990), representing an active relationship between the conscious subject and the object of the subject's consciousness (Crotty, 1998).

Therefore, the constructivist researcher focuses on interpreting participants' meanings of experiences and how these meanings are directed towards objects (Creswell, 2013). As participants' unique experiences create their lenses of interpretation (Schwandt, 2000) the researcher looks for and relies on the complexity of views participants hold. Similarly, the researcher's unique experiences influence the interpretations of constructs (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). Due to the context of each individual, multiple realities can emerge. It is assumed that there is no one truth; instead the researcher aims to construct a consensus of interpretations. To do so, the researcher inductively develops a theory or pattern of meaning (Creswell, 2013) that allows for a greater awareness of the subject of study and the development of a general worldview of the group studied (Hudson & Ozanne, 1998).

This study seeks to understand the meanings that consumers assign to fast and slow fashion. These meanings are interpretations of one's individual behaviours, and interactions with the behaviours of others and social situations (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Such interpretations, or constructs, allow people to understand their world, including fashion (Hudson & Ozanne, 1998). Therefore, one assumption of this study is that participants will construct individual and collective meaning through consciously engaging with fashion and the world in which they are interpreting (Crotty, 1998). In turn, a second assumption is that knowledge and meaning is created through interactions. Actual meaning will emerge once the researcher consciously engages with participants,

and works with them to facilitate their constructions of fashion consumption through dialogue (Crotty, 1998; Hudson & Ozanne, 1998).

3.3.2 Theoretical Perspective

Theoretical perspective is a philosophical stance lying behind the methodology (Crotty, 1998). In this sense, it explains the researcher's set of assumptions that are buried in the logic and criteria behind methodological decisions. Based on the researcher's epistemology, an interpretivist theoretical perspective is adopted as it is considered synonymous with the constructivist worldview (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This study is inductive and exploratory in nature as knowledge of the consumption experiences and meanings associated with fast and slow fashion is currently limited (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Hence, interpretivism is considered most appropriate to understand and interpret the subject matter, and focus inquiry on the meanings and values of participants (Creswell, 2013). Experience and behaviour form an inseparable relationship in terms of a phenomenon and the person experiencing the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Due to the unique experiences of both researcher and participant, the researcher cannot simply make inferences of others' behaviour. Rather, the researcher must enter participants' frame of reference to discern and facilitate construction of meaning (Creswell, 2013). This theoretical perspective lends itself well to the descriptive aim of the study, which is to explore the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption.

The interpretivist approach to human inquiry can be separated into three historical streams: hermeneutics, symbolic interactionism and phenomenology (Crotty, 1998). The constructivist's worldview further manifests in phenomenology (Creswell, 2013) through participants making sense of and describing their lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994). This study seeks to understand the meanings consumers attach to fast and slow fashion, therefore needing to inquire persons who have experienced the phenomenon to know what participants experienced and how they experienced it. Therefore, phenomenology is the theoretical perspective most suited to the research purpose.

3.3.3 Methodology

Methodology can be understood as the philosophical foundation of gathering knowledge and the design of methods to achieve a desired outcome (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Crotty, 1998). The methodology that logically follows the researcher's epistemological and theoretical assumptions is phenomenology. Phenomenology as a methodology arises

from its philosophical underpinnings, manifesting through Husserl (1931) rejecting the idea that positivist methods could be used to explore phenomena, particularly that of consciousness. Phenomenological research seeks to study the lived experiences of participants, viewing these experiences as conscious (Creswell, 2013). In line with constructivism, phenomenology similarly dismisses the idea of dichotomy between subjectivity and objectivity, maintaining consciousness is always 'of something'. This links back to the concept of intentionality of consciousness, whereby the reality of an object is inextricably linked to the subject's consciousness of it. The reality of the object, then, is constructed by the meaning of experience of an individual. Further, meaning mediates the relationship between subject and object, which constitutes experience (Churchill & Wertz, 2001). As this study seeks to explore the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption, a phenomenological approach is appropriate.

A phenomenological approach seeks to gain understanding of the nature and meaning of such experiences (Moustakas, 1994) by developing underlying themes and contexts with the intention of constructing a description of the phenomena as consciously experienced by participants (Polkinghorne, 1989; Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2013). This requires returning to things as themselves (Husserl, 1931), going beyond simply looking for the subjective experiences of individuals in a group, and rather seeking universal and invariant meanings (Giorgi, 1970; Polkinghorne, 1989). Inter-subjectivity in this study, then, can be achieved through dialogue and interactions between researcher and participant (Creswell, 2013). Multiple inter-subjective encounters will allow actual meaning attached to fashion consumption to emerge. However, in order for phenomenology to be successful in challenging the basic assumptions of sustainable fashion consumption and fast and slow fashion, it must be free of presuppositions (Husserl, 1931). The researcher must set aside meaning systems and preconceptions of the phenomenon that could bias the results (Crotty, 1998). In turn, this will allow for deeper understanding of constructions, and reinterpretation of consumption experiences through new meaning, fuller meaning or renewed meaning.

3.3.4 Methods

Methods are the techniques and procedures used to collect and analyse data (Crotty, 1998). As the methodology utilised a phenomenological approach, this provided the rationale for method decisions and the particular ways the methods were employed. For phenomenological studies, data collection primarily consists of in-depth interviews

(Creswell, 2013). Therefore, the primary data collection method in this study was qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews. Exploring the attitude-behaviour gap is complicated due to the range of conflicting attitudes and behaviours toward sustainable fashion consumption. Thus, it was important to understand the meanings attached to fast and slow fashion as a representation of what participants know, feel, believe and value in their experiences with fashion. In-depth interviews are considered the superior method by narrowing the focus to the meaning of the phenomenon to the group of individuals who have experienced it.

There are a plethora of ways phenomenological interview data can be analysed: analytically, thematically exemplificatively, exegetically, existentially or through a new, novel approach (Van Manen, 1990). Thematic analysis uncovers themes in the data, with each theme detailing a fundamental aspect of the structure of experience. As this research aims to explore the attitude-behaviour gap and understand the meanings attached to fast and slow fashion, thematic analysis was considered the superior analysis procedure as it allows the researcher to uncover layers of meaning inherent in the phenomena being perceived and derive a complete description of the experience (Langdridge, 2004). Due to the goal of resolving the research problem and answering the research questions, details of data collection and data analysis procedures are described specifically in the following sections.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

This section outlines the techniques and procedures that were used to inform the researcher's primary data collection method, in-depth interviews. In line with the researcher's philosophical and theoretical assumptions, key consideration is given to adopting a purposive sampling method that lends to participant selection criteria. Following recruitment of participants, development of the interview protocol is explained. Finally, pilot testing of interviews and the researcher's process of phenomenological bracketing is described prior to documenting data collection through semi-structured in-depth interviews.

3.4.1 Sampling Method

In line with qualitative research, this study employed a purposeful sampling approach (Creswell, 2013). As phenomenological studies require all participants to have experienced the phenomena of interest, a purposive sampling technique was deemed

appropriate. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique whereby the researcher deliberately selects participants based on particular characteristics. The expectation is that each participant selected will provide rich and enlightening information of value to the study. Due to this study's qualitative nature, emphasis is placed on a smaller sample size to gain exploratory, information-rich insight into the research topic (Huberman & Miles, 2002). There are many strategic lenses through which purposive sampling can be considered. In line with the sampling strategies employed in phenomenological studies, homogeneous sampling was selected (Creswell, 2013). A homogeneous approach focuses on participants who share similar traits or specific characteristics, and how this precise similarity can inform an understanding of the research problem and the study's central phenomenon. As this study focuses on exploring the attitude behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption and understanding the meanings attached to fast and slow fashion, the sample consists of participants with homogeneous experience with fast and slow fashion.

3.4.2 Participant Selection Criteria

Following selection of an appropriate sampling technique, consideration was given to participant selection criteria. The essential criterion in phenomenological research is selecting participants who have individually experienced the study's central phenomena and are interested in understanding the nature and meanings of the phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). Since it is proposed that the meanings attached to both fast and slow fashion contribute to the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption, participants were selected based on their experience with both fast and slow fashion. By doing so, it narrowed the focus to the phenomena of interest. Once interest was expressed in the study, the researcher had a brief telephone conversation with interested persons about their experience with fast and slow fashion. This was deemed an important part of the screening process, as the researcher was not interested in participants who were overtly sustainable with their consumption behaviour (Johnstone & Tan, 2015). Rather, participants who represented a more 'normal' fashion consumer who states that they were interested in sustainable fashion consumption (attitude) but their consumption practices did not necessarily reflect this (behaviours) (Johnstone & Tan, 2015; Johnstone & Hooper, 2016). Further, it was desirable that participants' age, culture and level of participation in sustainable consumption behaviours varied so that the sample was diverse (Groenewald, 2004). In turn, a wide range of perspectives helped to ascertain the invariant and universal aspects that are both unique and common in terms of the structure of

experience, therefore providing further insight into the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption.

To qualify to participate in the study, interested persons were ultimately chosen based on their knowledge and experience, their availability and willingness to participate, and their level of articulation and reflection expressed towards the phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). The sample primarily consisted of undergraduate and postgraduate students of Auckland University of Technology, which was deemed appropriate given their high level of experience and interest in fast and slow fashion (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

3.4.3 Recruitment of Participants

As the phenomenon dictates data collection procedures (Hycner, 1999) participants were recruited through personal networks of the researcher. The researcher emailed individuals providing an outline of the general nature of the study, the data collection timeframe and where it would be held, and incentives for participation. The email also outlined that voluntary expression of interest should be directed to the researcher by responding to the email. The researcher then followed up with interested persons by telephone conversation as a means of introduction to the purpose of the study and to ascertain their experience with the phenomenon of interest. Additional participants were recommended and recruited based on the personal networks of interested persons. Next, the researcher emailed details of the venue, allocation of an appropriate time slot for the interview and a copy of the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix A). Participants were provided with a physical copy of the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form (Appendix B) on arrival to their interview and prior to the interview commencing.

3.4.4 Development of the Interview Protocol

In order to resolve the research problem and answer the research questions posed, an interview protocol of indicative interview questions was developed (Appendix C). In line with the constructivist's worldview and the phenomenological perspective, interview questions were developed to be broad in nature so that participants were able to construct their own meaning of situations, objects and lived experiences (Creswell, 2013). Open-ended questions were directed towards participants' experiences, beliefs, feelings and convictions of fast and slow fashion (Groenewald, 2004). In line with Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) the initial interview questions convey deliberate naiveté to develop descriptions of the context (Giorgi 1970) and participant interpretation of their knowledge

and experience. Next, the interview questions aimed to reconstruct participants' experience and relationships with its structures. The concluding questions sought to elicit deeper meaning by allowing participants to reflect on the meaning of their experience. While an interview protocol was developed, this was not rigidly followed. Rather, the researcher structured questions and questioning in a way that suited each individual participant to enable thorough investigation. This flexibility maintained methodological consistency and increased trustworthiness, which will be discussed in further detail in the following sections.

3.4.5 Pilot Testing

Once the interview protocol was developed, the full list of draft questions was examined by the researcher's supervisors. The feedback and suggestions provided were used to make initial changes to the interview protocol. In turn, the researcher engaged in pilot testing of semi-structured in-depth interviews with three individuals who had experience with fast and slow fashion similar to that of the participants. Pilot testing allowed the researcher to gain an understanding of the vocabulary and language of participants (Creswell, 2013). This language was then used to refine the interview questions. Refining the interview questions in this way enabled access to participants' experience unencumbered by theoretical terms, and formed a means of phenomenological reduction. Pilot testing also refined the structure of the interview, reordering some of the questions to allow for more in-depth discussion. Once these additional changes were made, a second pilot test was conducted with one individual. As this test yielded rich insights into the phenomenon of interest, it was agreed by the researcher's supervisors that no further testing was required and the interview protocol was ready to be used to conduct the research. Further, pilot testing allowed the researcher to practice interview technique and therefore be better prepared to respond and reflect on dialogue.

3.4.6 Bracketing

In order to take a fresh perspective towards the phenomenon under investigation, the researcher set aside their own experiences as much as possible through bracketing (Moustakas, 1994) otherwise known as the suspension of natural attitude, or epoché (Husserl, 1931). While many academics agree that bracketing one's own subjective reality completely is impossible, the ultimate goal is to avoid projection (Moustakas, 1994; Munhall, 1994). People tend to believe others think and feel the same about reality, and therefore project these assumptions onto others. Thus, it was important for the

researcher to describe their own experiences with the phenomena and bracket out their views prior to conducting interviews with the experiences of participants (Creswell, 2013). This allowed the researcher to become conscious and attuned to their own beliefs in order to avoid projecting their assumptions onto participants. Suspension of understanding did not see the researcher forget what had been experienced, rather allowed for a focus on the experiences of the participants in the study without past knowledge determining these experiences (Giorgi, 1970).

3.4.7 In-depth Interviews

Following the completion of pilot testing and bracketing, data collection commenced. For phenomenological studies, in-depth interviews are considered most appropriate (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, the data collection method employed was semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The information sought from participants reflected complex decision making processes through their experiences, beliefs, feelings and convictions toward fashion consumption, which participants may themselves be unaware of (Groenewald, 2004). Thus, in-depth interviews were considered the superior method of data collection by narrowing the focus to the meaning of the phenomena to the group of individuals who had experienced it (Creswell, 2013). Further, the researcher was able to delve deeper into the meaning of experiences by facilitating participants' constructions of fashion consumption through dialogue (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Crotty, 1998; Hudson & Ozanne, 1998).

One-hour in-depth interviews were conducted (Moustakas, 1994) with ten participants in line with other phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2013). As Husserl (1931) suggests that a phenomenon can never be fully understood, the overarching goal of phenomenology was to look for universal meaning of participants' experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Thus, the researcher was aware additional participants would need to be recruited if theoretical saturation had not occurred (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In line with the researcher's philosophical and theoretical assumptions, interviews were conducted face-to-face (Crotty, 1998). To ensure trustworthiness of this method, the researcher considered Guba and Lincoln's (1982) naturalistic inquiry. Research setting is a key component of such design. Unlike rationalists who seek contrived and controllable settings such as laboratories, naturalists seek a natural setting to observe phenomena as they normally occur and arrive at reasonable interpretations. As face-to-face interviews

could be considered contrived, the researcher sought to mitigate this through conducting interviews at the location of the participant. This helped to gain greater insight into participants' perspectives and contextualise the discussion (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The majority of interviews were held at Auckland University of Technology.

Prior to the interview commencing, the participants were allocated time to provide informed consent (Appendix A & B) and become acquainted with the researcher and research setting (Creswell, 2013). In addition, the researcher asked for participants' permission to audio-tape the interviews. In order for participants to feel at ease during interviews, a relaxed atmosphere needed to be created and maintained (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The researcher sought to achieve this through developing a rapport with participants. For example, the first stage of the interview comprised the researcher discussing with the participant what they could expect during the interview and explaining that they could stop the interview if they felt uncomfortable at any time. The researcher also conveyed a neutral stance towards sustainable fashion consumption to ensure participants felt comfortable to discuss their attitudes and behaviours toward both fast and slow fashion (Johnstone & Tan, 2015). The actual questioning commenced informally by asking participants to discuss the concept of fashion. Such techniques made participants feel comfortable and at ease in describing their experiences, increasing participation and honesty of responses (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Further, the researcher ensured throughout the interview that questioning felt informal and that participants had time to reflect on and answer questions to build trust and attain reciprocal disclosure.

Interviews were conducted as an interchange of views between researcher and participant discussing phenomena of mutual interest (Kvale, 1996) with the researcher making sense of participants' worlds (Denzin, 1989). As the root of phenomenology is to understand the phenomenon as experienced by the participant (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998) conducting interviews in this way revealed the essence of in-depth feelings and beliefs toward the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Open-ended questioning was used to allow for listening to what participants said and did in their life setting (Creswell, 2013). As language can alter the subjectivity of one's reality (Harmon, 1990) the researcher mirrored the language of participants in questioning as much as possible. For example, if a participant used the word 'green', 'sustainable' or 'ethical' when describing their experiences, the researcher would in turn paraphrase and respond using the same terms. Using such language enabled access to participants' experiences unencumbered by theoretical terms (Creswell, 2013).

In addition, some projective techniques were used to help participants respond more openly (Johnstone & Tan, 2015). For example, when participants suggested that purchasing slow fashion was the right thing to do yet still purchased fast fashion, the researcher would ask questions such as '*why do you think some people buy fast fashion if they know it is not the right thing to do?*' Using this tactic was useful as it allowed participants to project their true thoughts and feelings onto others, which otherwise they may find hard to articulate (Ramsey, Ibbotson & McCole, 2006; Johnstone & Tan, 2015).

Throughout the interviews, the researcher attempted to convey curiosity and acceptance towards participants' responses to encourage elaboration of their experiences (McCracken, 1988; Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1989). The interview protocol was designed so that the interviews would be semi-structured in nature and allow participants to reflect on their experiences. This saw participants' perspectives shift upon examining these experiences (Warren, 2002). For example, several participants acknowledged that while their consumption behaviours were currently unsustainable, they would like their consumption behaviours to be more sustainable in the future. However, the interview protocol was not rigidly followed. Rather, the researcher structured questioning in a way that suited each individual participant to enable thorough investigation (Giorgi 1970; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Participants' responses to questions prompted additional questions to those detailed in the interview protocol. Actual meaning was then forged between researcher and participant through discussion and interaction.

Ultimately, data collection was a process of self-reflection for both researcher and participant (Polkinghorne, 1989). Memoing was a technique used throughout the data collection process to record reflective and descriptive field notes about what the researcher heard, saw and experienced during and after the interviews (Huberman & Miles, 2002). The researcher explained to participants prior to the interview commencing that memoing would occur to benefit further questioning and to orientate dialogue. However, notes were taken minimally to ensure participants felt comfortable and that the atmosphere remained informal. Further, memoing supported data analysis procedures by allowing the researcher to better reflect on, order and review their thought processes.

Interviews concluded with the researcher informing participants that they had the option to withdraw from the research prior to completion of data collection. Major themes emerged after the first three interviews, however the researcher conducted all ten

interviews to ensure that no new themes were emerging and theoretical saturation was met (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2013). Therefore, the researcher and their supervisors determined that further data collection was not required.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

This section outlines the techniques and procedures that were used to inform the researcher's primary data analysis method, thematic analysis. First, transcribing explains how the interview data was prepared for data analysis. In line with the researcher's philosophical and theoretical assumptions, the researcher then conducted a thematic analysis by developing open codes that were synthesised to illuminate themes emerging from across the data set. Themes expressed a description and structure of the phenomena of interest, with findings written to capture the essence of participants' experiences and unify meanings of experience (Van Manen, 1990; Moustakas, 1994) and related to the research problem and questions.

3.5.1 Transcribing the Data

The audio files from the interviews conducted with ten participants were sent to an external transcribing professional due to time constraints (see Appendix D for Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement). The interviews were transcribed verbatim into Microsoft Word® documents for analysis. Once the ten transcripts were received, they were examined for accuracy by checking against the interview audio files (Boyatzis, 1998). The researcher removed any information that could identify participants and replaced names with pseudonyms in accordance with the ethical principles of anonymity and confidentiality (Taylor & Bodgan, 1998; Creswell, 2013). In total, 202 1.5 line spaced, single transcribed pages from the original interview audio files were prepared for analysis.

3.5.2 Thematic Analysis

The interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative approach that identifies, analyses and reports key themes found across the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These themes act as interpretations of various aspects of the data (Boyatzis, 1998) that are fundamental to the structure of participants' experience (Van Manen, 1990). Thematic analysis was considered most appropriate as it was used to uncover patterns of meaning inherent in the phenomenon being perceived to derive a complete description of the experience (Langdridge, 2004; Ayres, 2008).

Analysis commenced with the researcher reading and re-reading the individual interview transcripts three to five times to become immersed in the data (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006). This allowed the researcher to gain an initial understanding of the way the participants talked about the phenomena of interest (Boyatzis, 1998) and an overall sense of the meaning of participants' experience with the phenomena (Spiggle, 1994).

Next, the researcher extracted sub-samples of participant responses to create a summary of each transcript, representing a unique pattern of each case (Boyatzis, 1998). The summaries were compared and contrasted to highlight similarities and differences across the data set, and identify consistent patterns of meaning. This helped to develop the initial categories for working with the data, or codes, by sorting the data into discrete and significant concepts. Codes were then labelled to allow the researcher to retrieve and review the data. Labels were conceptually meaningful of the phenomena studied, and were clear and concise to communicate the essence of the code. For example, the code 'what is slow fashion?' represented participants' understanding of the slow fashion concept. This ensured the code was close to the raw data and its own language.

Subsequent re-reading of the transcripts and summaries allowed the researcher to compare the codes against each other and discern codes that were repetitive. For example, 'emotional response', 'emotional attachment' and 'emotional experience' were all identified as individual codes during one of the first iterations of coding. However, the researcher decided that all of these codes represented 'connection'. The other codes were then collapsed, and 'connection' was decided as the final code. Conversely, other codes were found to comprise different concepts. For example, 'focus on the self' was identified as an individual code during one of the first iterations of coding. However, the researcher decided that this actually comprised three distinct self-objectives of 'connection', 'self-identity', and 'social identity'. These codes were differentiated accordingly. A similar process was followed to give each labelled code a definition. Therefore, the coding process was one of constant comparison, whereby codes were collapsed, differentiated, renamed and reorganised appropriately to ensure meaning was captured (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Ayres, 2008).

Once the final codes were identified, authentic themes were developed through synthesising codes with shared meaning (Ayres, 2008). Synthesis of codes into themes was driven by the research problem and phenomena of interest (Boyatzis, 1998). The

codes within a theme were clusters of related characteristics, with the theme itself representing an underlying construct. For example, the codes that related to aesthetic, symbolic and cultural meanings (‘connection’, ‘self-identity’ and ‘social identity’) were clusters of related characteristics, with the theme ‘meanings’ representing the underlying construct. Therefore, themes in this study convey important, prevalent patterned responses and shared meanings across the data set that contributes to the development of knowledge (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

A process of iteration was employed whereby the researcher moved back and forth during the stages of the analysis to ensure an optimal fit between data and themes. In turn, an inductive approach was taken, as little is understood about the phenomena of interest (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Using an inductive approach ensured the themes were strongly linked with the data (Patton, 1990; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes were identified at both a semantic level, through explicit meanings of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and at a latent level, through the underlying ideas of the data (Boyatzis, 1998). A semantic approach was important to identify surface meanings of participants’ understanding and experiences with fast and slow fashion that were not beyond what participants said. Description structured the data into patterns of semantic content and interpreted by the researcher to suggest potential implications. However, this study primarily focused on a latent approach to examine participants’ underlying ideas, assumptions, ideologies that informed the semantic content of the data. In turn, a latent approach helped to identify the features of sustainable fashion consumption and fast and slow fashion (informing RQ2, RQ3, RQ4) that gave the semantic content its particular form and meaning (partially informing RQ1) (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Boyatzis, 1998).

Qualitative data management software NVivo® 10 was employed for organisation and retrieval of the codes and themes (Ayres, 2008). However, the researcher directed the analysis rather than relying on the software to generate findings. Potential limitations arose from the potential bias and subjectivity of the researcher, which were given consideration throughout data analysis and mitigated through the process of bracketing. In addition, the researcher used memoing (Huberman & Miles, 2002) and a reflexive journal (Guba & Lincoln, 1982) from pilot testing through to completion of data analysis. Reflective and descriptive field notes alongside journal entries were documented in Microsoft Word® detailing the researcher’s thought processes and questions. This supported analysis by allowing the researcher to revisit, review and reorder thoughts on

the iterative processes used to ensure authenticity of themes (Spiggle, 1994; Boyatzis, 1998; Taylor & Bodgan, 2002).

Developing authentic themes helped the researcher to construct a description of the phenomena as experienced by participants, capture the essence of participants' experiences and unify meanings of experience (Van Manen, 1990; Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, the findings provide further insight into the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption, and an understanding of the meanings attached to fast and slow fashion.

3.6 Establishing Trustworthiness and Authenticity

Establishing trustworthiness and authenticity of this study was a key consideration throughout the research process, supplanting positivist validity, reliability and objectivity measures (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Considering trustworthiness and authenticity is important to ensure methodological rigor of qualitative research. This helps to assure the reader that the study is something that they can trust, with the data authentically reflecting the lived experiences of the participants from which they were derived. With phenomenological studies, the description presented aims to serve as a guide for the reader's actual or potential experience of the study's central phenomena (Spiegelberg, 1982). Therefore, trustworthiness and authenticity are also established when the findings are rich, reasonable, responsible, recognisable, responsive and contain revelations that raise consciousness of the reader (Munhall, 1994). Four principles were used to establish trustworthiness and authenticity of this study: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Each principle will be discussed in turn.

3.6.1 Credibility

Within the principle of credibility, it is assumed that there is no one 'true' answer, rather that there are multiple constructions of reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Thus, credibility is measured by how accurately these constructions are represented in the findings. This requires the researcher to demonstrate how accurately their interpretations reflect participants' responses. In this study credibility was safeguarded through conducting in-depth interviews over a period of six months, ensuring prolonged engagement. This allowed the researcher to test for their own biases, as well as the biases of participants. In turn, the longer timeframe for data collection ensured persistent observation, allowing the researcher to identify pervasive, salient characteristics of the research problem and

context. This was particularly important as the current state of the fashion industry is very fast changing. The study continually used peer debriefing to keep the researcher honest and to test insights with individuals uninvolved in the study. Finally, the technique of memoing and use of a reflexive journal detailed the thought processes, iterative processes and reasoning behind research decisions.

3.6.2 Transferability

Transferability can be measured by the degree to which the study's results can be transferred to other research contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). This study did not seek to generalise findings, rather to provide rich and enlightening information within its chosen research context. Thus, transferability was achieved through the study's use of purposive sampling and the thick description of findings. Thick descriptions allow other researchers to assess whether this study can be transferred to the context of their own research.

3.6.3 Dependability

Dependability can be measured by the soundness of logic behind the researcher's methodological processes, decisions and interpretations (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Dependability was achieved using a dependability audit whereby the researcher's reflexive journal detailed research processes, data collection, data analysis, findings and interpretive notes. In turn, these interpretations explained the researcher's logic. Further, discussion with the researcher's supervisors throughout the study ensured the decisions made were dependable.

3.6.4 Confirmability

Confirmability requires the research process and findings to be free of the researcher's own biases, including their background, interests and motivations (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Confirmability was achieved through the researcher undertaking a process of bracketing, whereby the researcher set aside their own experiences as much as possible to avoid projection of their assumptions onto participants (Moustakas, 1994; Munhall, 1994). The researcher practised reflexivity by detailing their emotional state, assumptions and prejudices about the research problem and context in their reflexive journal. The researcher then used their reflexive journal to conduct a confirmability audit to assess whether their views had biased the research process and findings. Further, triangulation was achieved between the researcher, the researcher's peers and supervisors, and the researcher's reflexive journal, confirming the logic of the researcher's interpretations.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter explained the methodological approach and decisions for this study. The researcher's philosophical and theoretical assumptions, data collection and data analysis procedures were detailed. The researcher employed phenomenological research by means of in-depth interviews to narrow the focus to the meaning of the study's central phenomena to the group of individuals who had experienced it. Further, the researcher was able to delve deeper into the meaning of experiences by facilitating participants' constructions of fashion consumption through dialogue. Thematic analysis was then used to uncover layers of meaning inherent in the phenomena being perceived to derive a complete description of the experience. Developing authentic themes helped the researcher to capture the essence of participants' experience and unify meanings of experience. The chapter then explained how this study established trustworthiness and authenticity throughout the research process. The following chapter comprises the findings that explore the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption and further understanding of the meanings attached to fast and slow fashion as a result of these methodological components.

Chapter Four: Findings

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter, Methodology, explained the logic that determined the methodological approach and decisions for this present research study. This included the researcher's epistemology, constructivism, which assumes all knowledge and meaningful reality is based on human practices, constructed by people's interactions with objects and their world, and then transferred within an essentially social context (Crotty, 1998). The researcher's theoretical perspective, interpretivism, was deemed appropriate as it is considered synonymous with the constructivist worldview (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). These philosophical assumptions guided methodology selection, a phenomenological approach, and method choice, phenomenological research by means of semi-structured in-depth interviews and thematic analysis (Van Manen, 1990; Crotty, 1998; Creswell, 2013).

This chapter outlines the findings of this present research study by analysing and interpreting the data collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with ten participants who had experienced the study's central phenomena. Thematic analysis was used to uncover consistent, underlying patterns of meaning inherent in the phenomena being perceived (Langdridge, 2004) from across the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This helped to develop and organise codes and themes that derived a complete description of the phenomena as consciously experienced by the participants (Polkinghorne, 1989; Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, the results are presented as themes that relate to the research purpose of this study:

> To explore the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption by understanding the meanings consumers attach to fast and slow fashion, and how this can provide benefit to marketing academics and practitioners.

In addition to fulfilling the research purpose, the results are presented to answer the research questions of this study:

RQ1. What meanings do consumers attach to fast and slow fashion?

RQ2. What do these meanings articulate?

RQ3. What are the personal and societal trade-offs consumers consider when adopting sustainable fashion behaviours?

RQ4. How do these meanings and articulations reconcile with consumers' personal belief systems?

4.2 Development of Themes

As explained in previous sections, thematic analysis of the data identified codes, which were then grouped into themes. Four authentic themes were developed from the semi-structured in-depth interview data: understanding, meanings, attitudes and behaviour. These themes are illustrated below in Table 4.2. Using an interpretive approach meant letting the data tell the story (Boyatzis, 1998). Moreover, phenomenology required inclusion of the invariant, as well as the universal, aspects of the data that were both unique and common in terms of the structure of experience (Giorgi, 1970; Polkinghorne, 1989).

Thus, it became clear during the analysis process that there were themes that needed to be developed that directly addressed the above research purpose and questions, but also themes that needed to be developed that were relevant to and indirectly addressed the research purpose and questions. Therefore, the findings are represented as a sequence, with each theme detailing a fundamental aspect of the structure of experience (Van Manen, 1990). First, understanding examines how participants comprehended the phenomena of interest. Participants' understanding and perceptual interpretations and judgements were found to influence the meanings participants attached to fast and slow fashion. Meanings answer RQ1 and RQ2, and inform RQ3 and RQ4. Meanings, in turn, shaped, and were inextricably linked to, the attitudes and behaviour toward sustainable fashion consumption, which also inform RQ3 and RQ4. These themes also generate insights into the phenomena of interest beyond the research questions posed.

The findings commence with the first two themes of understanding and meanings separately comparing and contrasting participants' responses in relation to fast and slow fashion. Following this, the next three themes of attitudes and behaviour solely focus on sustainable fashion consumption, with purchase of slow fashion clothing as the practice of the phenomena. This funnel-like approach was deemed particularly important to

highlight how both fast and slow fashion impacts the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption, how meaning is inherent throughout decision-making, and the complexity of decision-making.

Table 4.2 ***Summary of Themes***

Theme	Open Code	Description
Understanding	What is fast fashion?	The extent to which participants understand the fast fashion concept.
	What makes fashion fast?	Participants' perceptions of what makes fashion fast.
	What is slow fashion?	The extent to which participants understand the slow fashion concept.
	What makes fashion slow?	Participants' perceptions, and preconceptions, of what makes fashion slow.
Meanings	Connection	The role that the aesthetic meanings attached to fast and slow fashion play in the emotional connection participants experience.
	Self-identity	The role that the symbolic meanings attached to fast and slow fashion play in constructing participants' self-identities.
	Social identity	The role that the cultural meanings attached to fast and slow fashion play in constructing participants' social identities.
Attitudes	Concern for environmental and social welfare	The extent to which participants were concerned for, and considered, environmental and social welfare when making fashion purchase decisions.
	Ability	The extent to which participants believe they have the ability to make slow fashion purchase decisions.
	Responsibility	The extent to which participants believe they are responsible for initiating change in the fashion system with their fashion purchase decisions.

Behaviour	Reflection	The level of reflection versus impulse that participants experience when making fashion purchase decisions.
	Consciousness	The level of consciousness versus unconsciousness that participants experience when making fashion purchase decisions.

4.2.1 Overview of Themes

Theme one explores participants' understanding of the fast fashion and slow fashion concepts, which in turn informed their perceptual interpretations and judgements. Theme two identifies participants as active meaning-makers that attach aesthetic, symbolic and cultural meanings to fast and slow fashion. In turn, these meanings helped participants achieve their self-objectives of connection, self-identity and social identity. Theme three compares and contrasts participants' attitudes toward sustainable fashion consumption, identifying that participants' concern for the environment at times conflicted with their self-objectives, and their perceived abilities and responsibilities. Finally, theme four reiterates the disconnection between participants' attitudes and behaviour. Participants made fashion purchase decisions with varying levels of reflection and consciousness.

The findings that follow represent the interpretive analysis by the researcher. These findings are supported and explained with excerpts of text from the sub-samples of participant responses used to create summaries of each interview transcript. In line with the researcher's philosophical assumptions and methodological decisions, the excerpts that were chosen to capture the essence of the group of participants' experiences and therefore unified the meanings of experience (Van Manen, 1990; Moustakas, 1994). In order to protect participants' privacy, their names have been removed and replaced by pseudonyms. The themes of understanding, meanings, attitudes and behaviour will each be discussed in turn.

4.3 Understanding

The findings commence by exploring participants' understanding of the fast fashion and slow fashion concepts. Unsurprisingly, participants' understanding of the concepts was very contrasting. Participants expressed a clear understanding of the fast fashion concept, which informed their perceptual interpretations; they perceived fast fashion to be low cost, low quality and trend-led. In turn, these interpretations corresponded with negative

perceptual judgements of sustainability. Conversely, participants expressed a lack of understanding of the slow fashion concept. Lack of understanding of the slow fashion concept was a source of confusion and complexity for participants. This caused participants to forge their own definitions of slow fashion within their personal contextual frameworks. These definitions similarly informed participants' perceptual interpretations, and in some cases their preconceptions; they perceived slow fashion to be high cost, high quality and classic. In turn, these interpretations corresponded with positive perceptual judgements toward sustainability.

4.3.1 What is Fast Fashion?

Participants were asked to describe what they thought fast fashion was. Participants were familiar with the concept, and were confident in sharing their understanding of the concept.

> "Fast fashion is like, the cycle of clothing is quick. Instead of having stuff come out (seasonally) or something, it might be every two weeks."
>
> [Rachel]

> "Every week or every couple of weeks (fast fashion) has new styles and lines arriving, people will buy them, it's out the door and something new is there."
>
> [Bridgette]

> "Its where the products turn over quickly. So, something may be in one week whereas next week it might not be."
>
> [Mattie]

Participants were then provided with a definition of fast fashion, and were asked if it changed their understanding. Participants felt that the definition was in line with their expectations, and did not change their thinking on the concept.

> "Yeah, that's my understanding."
>
> [Lucy]

> "Yeah, that is pretty much what I said."
>
> [Camille]

> "Everybody has kind of heard of fast fashion."
>
> [Mattie]

Therefore, participants' understanding of fast fashion reflected repeated experience and interaction with the phenomenon. Moreover, the findings allude to the prevalence of fast fashion in today's society. For example, the use of the word 'everybody' suggests that participants identified fast fashion with the majority, and therefore fast fashion consumption as a socially accepted practice.

4.3.2 What Makes Fashion Fast?

Participants' understanding of fast fashion helped inform their perceptual interpretations of fast fashion. Participants perceived that fast fashion could be identified by a low price. While the word 'inexpensive' implies the opposite of luxury, and 'cheap' implies low-grade clothing, participants' agreed that fast fashion was priced in a way that was accessible and acceptable for the majority of consumers.

> "Inexpensive."
>
> [Camille]

> "It's cheap."
>
> [Emiline]

Participants perceived fast fashion to be based on continual change in styles and trends, indicating that such clothing could not be kept and used long-term.

> "On trend and always coming though with new styles."
>
> [Camille]

> "They tend to be more seasonal, really fashionable pieces."
>
> [Sylvie]

> "So, it doesn't have 'stickability'. It's kind of revolving and ever changing."
>
> [Mattie]

Participants suggested that fast fashion clothing was made from low-grade materials and manufacturing processes, therefore perceiving fast fashion to be low quality.

> "I would say it would be lower quality."
>
> [Camille]

> "So, lower quality materials have been used to make the items... And how it's made."
>
> [Mattie]

Due to fast fashion being perceived as low-quality, participants expected such clothing to be non-durable.

> "They don't last long."
>
> [Rachel]

> "It's not going to stay in your wardrobe very long, it might fall apart after a couple of wears."
>
> [Camille]

However, low quality did not deter participants from continuing to purchase fast fashion. In fact, due to fast fashion's low quality and low price, participants were able to purchase vast quantities of clothing.

> "It was great. I could probably get like ten pieces."
>
> [Sylvie]

> "I was able to buy lots of stuff."
>
> [Emiline]

In turn, participants' perceptual interpretations of fast fashion's characteristics corresponded with negative perceptual judgements toward sustainability.

> "I think if products are of low cost, low quality, they come out so quickly like you know that just speaks volumes for how it was made and where it was made."
>
> [Lucy]

> "I kind of question how they can get it out so fast and I feel like that it's not very socially sustainable for the people that are making it. I think it must be sweatshops because of that."
>
> [Natalie]

> "Cheap means like maybe people make cuts in places and shortcuts in places, and they may not pay a proper wage."
>
> [Mattie]

Overall, the findings reveal that participants were willing to compromise on fast fashion's shortcomings (i.e. sustainability) due to highly valuing the novelty fast fashion afforded.

4.3.3 What is Slow Fashion?

Participants were asked to describe what they thought slow fashion was. In contrast to fast fashion, participants were generally unfamiliar with the slow fashion concept.

> "I've never heard the term."
>
> [Natalie]

> "I've never really come across slow fashion or that term."
>
> [Mattie]

When probed further, participants suggested that slow fashion was the opposite of fast fashion.

> "If I heard slow fashion I would think it is opposite to fast fashion, so it's something that takes time."
>
> [Emiline]

> "Slow fashion when you say it cause of fast fashion is like the time... how I think about it slow means like over a longer period of time that something would be made."
>
> [Rachel]

Participants were then provided with a definition of slow fashion, and were asked if it changed their understanding. The definition was not what participants expected and changed their thinking on the concept. The definition also prompted participants to establish a link between sustainability and slow fashion.

> "Well that just changes it completely. So, I like the idea (that it relates to) sustainability."
>
> [Mattie]

> "I would change my answer for slow fashion...the way you described it, it just sounds like someone who is getting paid reasonably for the work and isn't harmful to the environment."
>
> [Ruby]

> "Slow fashion obviously considers every single aspect of the supply chain which furthers my understanding of it, which I wasn't aware of."
>
> [Lucy]

Participants then explained that the term 'slow fashion' created confusion around concept. Participants indicated that 'slow' implied a length of time and 'fashion' implied transient trends. Participants conceptualised this sentiment by invoking the word 'conscious' rather than 'slow', and made a distinction between the use of 'style' and 'fashion'.

> "Maybe slow fashion is not the right terminology for it... that definition changes everything. I don't think it should be called slow fashion."
>
> [Rachel]

> "So, it's actually fashion that is conscious."
>
> [Mattie]

> "I don't know if its fashion... it's more about style."
>
> [Sylvie]

Several participants went on to suggest that they had encountered the slow fashion concept being described by other terms.

> "Actually, I think that I've heard of like 'green' or 'eco-friendly' fashion before."
>
> [Mattie]

Therefore, participants' understanding of the slow fashion concept reflected little experience and interaction with the phenomenon. Participants did not associate slow fashion with the majority, alluding to the idea that slow fashion consumption was not yet considered a socially accepted practice.

4.3.4 What Makes Fashion Slow?

Because of the confusion and contradictions participants expressed in their understanding of the slow fashion concept, participants created their own definitions. These definitions informed participants' perceptual interpretations, and in some instances participants' preconceptions, of what made fashion 'slow'. Participants suggested that slow fashion could be identified by a high price, and was therefore potentially inaccessible and unacceptable for the majority of consumers.

> "So, they're higher in price."
>
> [Bridgette]

> "Premium price points."
>
> [Sylvie]

Participants perceived slow fashion to be classic as opposed to trend-led. Thus, participants believed slow fashion could be kept and used long-term.

> "I think classical pieces, things that stay around for a while."
>
> [Sylvie]

> "Slow fashion might be something that is classic that stays around."
>
> [Camille]

In turn, participants perceived slow fashion to be an investment as its high quality meant clothing would be durable.

> "You've invested in something, you know it's going to last."
>
> [Sylvie]

> "I associate it with quality, so something I can use time and time again."
>
> [Natalie]

These perceptual interpretations of slow fashion's characteristics corresponded with positive perceptual judgements toward sustainability.

> "I see slow fashion as maybe pieces that are meant to last so they generally have been made from a more ethical source."
>
> [Mattie]

> "Slow fashion is where the opposite of fast fashion whereby the retailer is very clear and open about their whole supply chain, where they get the goods or source the materials for the goods, where they're made, how they get to the store."
>
> [Lucy]

Overall, the findings indicate that participants relied on their perceptions and preconceptions to guide their assessment of what made fashion slow.

> "I assume that because of price and the quality of the clothes that they are made (sustainably). But I can't guarantee."
>
> [Ruby]

> "I would hope that something that cost $300 has workers paid more just because otherwise where else would the money going?"
>
> [Natalie]

Limitations in participants' understanding of the slow fashion concept, and their resulting perceptions and preconceptions, highlight the potential for misinformed attitudes and consumption behaviour to occur.

4.3.5 Section Summary

The findings in this section reveal participants' understanding, and perceptions and preconceptions, of the fast and slow fashion concepts. All participants had an understanding of the fast fashion concept, associating fast fashion with the majority and therefore fast fashion consumption as a socially accepted practice. Moreover, participants compromised on fast fashion's unfavourable characteristics (i.e. sustainability) due to highly valuing the novelty fast fashion afforded. Conversely, most participants were generally unfamiliar with the slow fashion concept. Participants initially understood slow fashion to be the opposite of fast fashion. When prompted with a definition of slow fashion, participants established a link between slow fashion and sustainability. However, a sense of the complexity and unfamiliarity surrounding the phenomenon meant participants perceived slow fashion to be potentially 'alternative'. Participants' perceptions and preconceptions of slow fashion (i.e. high price, high quality) guided their assessment of what made fashion slow, with these interpretations able to misinform attitudes and consumption behaviour. Therefore, participants' understanding and perceptions of fast and slow fashion were particularly important as they significantly influenced the meanings participants attached to fast and slow fashion, and in turn; formed the basis of participants' attitudes and behaviour toward sustainable fashion consumption.

4.4 Meanings

This theme uncovers the meanings participants attached to fast and slow fashion, what these meanings articulate, and how understanding such meanings help to explore the attitude-behaviour gap apparent in sustainable fashion consumption. The findings reveal that participants attached not only symbolic and cultural meanings (e.g. McCracken, 1986) to fast and slow fashion, but also aesthetic meanings. These meanings were used to articulate, or achieve, three distinct self-objectives of connection, self-identity and social identity. While participants attached the same meanings to fast and slow fashion, the way participants used these meanings to achieve self-objectives differed. Hence, the findings are separated out as fast and slow fashion to compare and contrast the differences accordingly.

The aesthetic meanings participants attached to fast and slow fashion articulated participants' connection objectives, corresponding with participants' emotional responses. However, these responses differed in terms of emotional intensity and durability, and therefore the type of connection and relationship participants formed with fast and slow fashion. Fast fashion afforded immediate gratification, which resulted in low levels of emotional attachment and dissatisfaction. Conversely, slow fashion afforded sustained emotional experiences, which resulted in high levels of emotional attachment and long-term satisfaction.

Participants' understanding of fast and slow fashion reflected their shared cultural viewpoints interpreted through lenses of individual life experiences (McCracken, 1986). Thus, a key distinction is made between participants' levels of self-construct and self-conception – self-identity, the individual self; and social identity, the collective self. The symbolic meanings participants attached to fast and slow fashion articulated participants' self-identity objectives, relating to their self-concept, self-image, self-esteem, personal values and identity projects. However, participants used fast fashion to achieve desired social positions and temporary self-identities, whereas they used slow fashion to achieve the most authentic version of themselves.

Finally, the cultural meanings participants attached to fast and slow fashion articulated participants' social identity objectives. Participants used fast fashion to achieve social approval. In contrast, participants used slow fashion aligned to convey their own self-concept to others.

4.4.1 Connection

The aesthetics of fast and slow fashion corresponded with participants' emotional responses. Participants focussed on how clothing looked, how clothing made them look and in turn how that made them feel. The aesthetic meanings attached to fast and slow fashion helped participants articulate their connection objectives. Connections objectives comprised participants' emotional experience, the intensity and durability of the emotional attachment, and the type of connection, and therefore the relationship, formed with fast and slow fashion.

Fast Fashion

Participants began by describing the aesthetic appeal of fast fashion. Participants were captivated by the transient trends of fast fashion, being 'fashionable', 'fun', 'daring' and 'exciting'.

> "They would be really amazing fashionable pieces probably from the runway at that point in time."
>
> [Sylvie]

> "It looks great. Its young and fun and a little bit daring and a little bit... it's just kind of like all those exciting words that come with it."
>
> [Mattie]

Although participants indicated an awareness of the negative impact fast fashion had on environmental and social welfare, this was outweighed by the emotional experience fast fashion purchases afforded. Participants sought emotional arousal through an exciting shopping experience and buying large quantities of fast fashion, resulting in immediate gratification. Thus, participants assigned aesthetic meaning based on how fast fashion clothing looked, and how they would feel purchasing it.

> "Sometimes with fast fashion I do associate it with sweatshops. Sometimes I know that the environment might not be the first consideration... but I felt really good because I had a number of items which I could wear the next day and feel confident."
>
> [Sylvie]

> "I really enjoy shopping, so retail therapy is a real thing for me. I buy these pieces and when I wear them to work or when I go out and I have something new on it makes me feel really happy and really confident."
>
> [Rachel]

Fast fashion also engendered enjoyment through participants being able to change and experiment with their physical appearance by creating various looks with a superfluity of clothing.

> "That allows you to look different every day. So, if you have a number of pieces, I get up in the morning and I feel like '*oh what do I want to wear today?*' It kind of motivates you if you have new pieces in your wardrobe. I get really excited."
>
> [Sylvie]

> "It's a great way to mix up your wardrobe."
>
> [Bridgette]

However, while participants experienced a strong initial emotional response to purchasing fast fashion, they indicated that the feeling did not last.

> "That feeling can get lost... When I first bought it, it was cool. It used to make me feel really good. But now it just doesn't make me feel like anything."
>
> [Rachel]

> "I suppose it's just the way that it makes me feel. I mean that changes because it's a fleeting moment."
>
> [Natalie]

> "So basically, it's cool for a second and then next week you are over it."
>
> [Sylvie]

Thus, in line with the previous research (e.g. Watson & Yan, 2013) participants were driven to continually consume fast fashion by the novelty it afforded. Participants indicated a strong desire to frequently replace their fast fashion purchases with new offerings. This meant that participants did not have time to develop a lasting connection with fast fashion clothing, and ultimately ended up feeling dissatisfied.

> "I have a thing about having to have new looks. James is always asking '*why are you buying so many new clothes?*' And I say, '*because I don't like wearing old things.*' It makes me feel good when it's new, but after a while I lose that. I don't know why. Then I want something new again."
>
> [Rachel]

> "You start off loving it, and then it's like you hate even looking at it in your wardrobe... that's when I'll give it away or chuck it or whatever and I need something new ASAP. You don't feel good when you hate your clothes so you need something new, you know?"
>
> [Lucy]

> "If I buy something from fast fashion I know it's not going to be around that long, I know I'm going to need to replace it soon. So, I don't form an attachment with that stuff."
>
> [Bridgette]

> "I am not, like, I don't feel connected to it. I would never feel connected to it. It's easy to replace."
>
> [Emiline]

The findings reveal that the type of connection participants experienced with fast fashion helped to develop the relationship formed with the phenomenon (Fournier, 1998). Although participants suggested that they were not 'connected' to fast fashion as it was 'replaceable', participants actually used fast fashion to try to achieve their desired selves (Kleine, Kleine & Allen, 1995). Therefore, self-connections supported relationship maintenance due to feelings of dependency and interdependence (Fournier, 1998), resulting in tolerance of adverse circumstances. For example, the negative impact fast fashion had on environmental and social welfare, dissatisfaction and the frequency of replacing clothing.

Slow Fashion

Similar to that of fast fashion, participants described the aesthetic appeal of slow fashion. However, the language used was notably different. Participants used words such as 'beautiful' and 'thoughtful', as opposed to 'exciting' and 'daring'.

> "Slow fashion like I think I said for me aesthetically it's beautiful."
>
> [Sylvie]

> "I just kind of consider it more minimalist... just a very select kind of thoughtful pieces."
>
> [Natalie]

> "It usually tends to be classical pieces for me."
>
> [Sylvie]

Thus, participants associated fast fashion consumption with experiencing an emotional thrill, and associated slow fashion consumption with a more subdued initial emotional response. Participants also assigned aesthetic meaning to slow fashion based on how slow fashion clothing looked, and how participants would feel purchasing it. However, participants had particular emotional experiences with slow fashion by knowing they were consuming products that were different to that of mass-produced goods.

> "I think about special pieces... they are quite meaningful right. Yeah special and kind of different... more unique maybe."
>
> [Mattie]

> "I feel pretty good when I've made a purchase... And I kind of feel proud that I own that piece. Yeah, I think it just makes you feel special."
>
> [Sylvie]

> "I feel pretty good that I have got something that no-one else is going to have."
>
> [Rachel]

Such experiences fostered memorable ownership, with participants recalling positive memories of consumption. Wearing slow fashion clothing again allowed participants to relive certain feelings.

> "I have clothing that I can like, I can remember the way they made you feel so I bring them out and I can feel that way. Because you look a certain way and want to feel the way that maybe you felt in it."
>
> [Rachel]

> "I guess the feelings are the memories that are attached to it... it surrounds the journey of buying something so who I was with, where I was, what I've done wearing that piece of clothing. You can just look at something and think about, like, that really memorable night wearing this piece."
>
> [Bridgette]

Participants all agreed that slow fashion could be kept and used for a long time, which provided continued satisfaction. Similar to the findings of Holt (2009) and Pookulangara and Shephard (2013), possession and consumption of clothing over a long period of time fostered emotional durability, whereby a connection between clothing and wearer was formed. Participants' connection with slow fashion spanned temporal horizons (Fournier, 1998) by being nostalgic and allowing participants to revisit their past self, as well as contributing to their current and future selves (Kleine, et al., 1995).

> "I feel more connected (to slow fashion). It's an emotional connection I feel. I feel like it's part of me, and like I am part of the brand."
>
> [Emiline]

> "I'm still obsessed with it."
>
> [Sylvie]

Therefore, the type of connection participants experienced with slow fashion helped to develop durable relationship bonds, which resulted in rich layers of meaning that reflected love, trust, commitment and intimacy (Fournier, 1998). This meaning fostered the relationship culture and supported relationship stability through sustained saliency over time.

4.4.2 Self-identity

Participants placed particular importance on fast and slow fashion due to its perceived ability to construct their self-identities. The symbolic meanings attached to fast and slow fashion helped participants articulate their self-identity objectives, comprising their self-concept, self-image, self-esteem, personal values and identity projects.

Fast Fashion

Participants purchased fast fashion clothing that aligned with their self-image, placing importance on how they could complement and enhance their physical appearance.

> "Because you know it looks really good on you."
>
> [Mattie]

> "I like it and I like how it makes me look."
>
> [Margot]

> "It fits me really good and I look really good in it."
>
> [Rachel]

Participants' purchased fast fashion that aligned with and enhanced their self-concept and self-esteem (e.g. Sirgy 1982, 1985), however decision-making seemed to operate below a level of conscious awareness. Participants felt little need for uniqueness. Rather, they wanted to 'keep up' with trends and with others in their social environment. Therefore, participants conformed to the consumption behaviour of others to gain social recognition (i.e. praise, liking, approval) (Bagozzi & Lee, 2012). Keeping up with trends meant participants were 'in the know' of what was fashionable and what was not, therefore emanating the meaning of relevancy to others and to themselves.

> "OK so I would buy it to try and fit in with trends."
>
> [Ruby]

> "Fast fashion keeps me relevant."
>
> [Sylvie]

> "I want to be relevant."
>
> [Natalie]

Participants also used fast fashion as a status and symbolic strategy (e.g. Baudrillard, 1981, 1993). Participants believed keeping up with trends would help them to achieve desired social statuses. This resulted in higher levels of materialism, with participants evaluating their success by their consumption patterns (e.g. Larsen, et al., 1999). Thus,

participants engaged in fast fashion consumption to attain and maintain social positions (Crane, 2000).

> "For me it's like a status thing as well."
>
> [Sylvie]

> "It elevates your feeling of social status knowing that you've got lots of pieces."
>
> [Bridgette]

> "Social status is more like '*look what I have*' because I am really competitive... It's like '*look what I got*' and then they would be jealous and you would be happy."
>
> [Ruby]

Participants expressed emerging desires and notions of their self-concept and the personal values they held. They were unclear of who they wanted to be, having temporary self-identities. Thus, the primary symbolic meaning of fast fashion for participants was its changing nature aligned with their evolving, multiple selves (Binkley, 2008).

> "I am kind of known as a bit of a 'fashionista' because I am always wearing these pieces and I really enjoy that. I enjoy being known for changing and keeping up with the trends."
>
> [Sylvie]

The symbolic act of consuming fast fashion, then, was a way for participants to gratify their temporary self-identities. With new fast fashion styles swiftly superseding the old, participants could easily sustain their multiple selves in evolution (Binkley, 2008; Joy, et al., 2012). However, the nature of participants' relationship with fast fashion fostered a perpetual state of dissatisfaction over their self-perceptions.

Slow Fashion

Similar to fast fashion, participants purchased slow fashion that aligned with their self-image. While participants thought it was important to look and feel good wearing slow

fashion, the act of consuming slow fashion was less trend-led and more about participants reflecting their personal style.

> "I use it more to buy statement pieces which I feel is more a reflection of myself."
>
> [Bridgette]

> "To achieve that classic style."
>
> [Sylvie]

Slow fashion purchase decisions also centred on self-concept, however participants used such clothing to distinguish themselves from others and express their individual being. Slow fashion was associated with being 'different', which in turn emanated this meaning to others and to themselves.

> "It kind of sets you apart from others."
>
> [Lucy]

> "I bought it, like trying to be different."
>
> [Ruby]

> "I want to stand out. And it's part of who I am. I don't want to be the same."
>
> [Emiline]

Thus, participants consumed slow fashion based on their personal values. However, participants were motivated to purchase slow fashion based on others-orientated values (Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002). For example, concern for environmental and social welfare.

> "It says '*Emiline has more to her; she's ethical and she's helping others'*."
>
> [Emiline]

> "Because of who I am as a person and the things I stand for, like you know more eco-friendly products."
>
> [Mattie]

In turn, participants revealed that authenticity was the key symbolic meaning that slow fashion possessed. Participants suggested that not only did slow fashion align with their self-concept and personal values, but that it also helped to construct, maintain and communicate an authentic identity, or their 'true' self (Fournier, 1998).

> "Some people hold value with what they buy, what they wear. So, to be authentic, I would buy it (slow fashion)."
>
> [Camille]

> "Its authentic. Fast fashion is not authentic, it's for copycats... authentic is more a person who is true to himself, who is true about where his clothes came from."
>
> [Emiline]

Ultimately, participants who had formed meaningful relationships with slow fashion felt a sense of development in their personal growth and well-being. In line with Belk (1988), slow fashion carried a sense of participants' past, who they were and where they were going.

> "It's something that took me a while. But eventually I just started to match the way I wanted to portray myself... I guess for me slow was a way to achieve the goal."
>
> [Natalie]

> "I have been more likely in the last couple of years to buy slow fashion and that has been an influence from myself because I am a different person than I was a few years ago... working towards goals and how I would like to see myself because I think she is pretty neat."
>
> [Camille]

> "This whole concept of being pro-environmental and all that now has come to me later in life, as I have discovered who I am."
>
> [Mattie]

Therefore, participants' relationships with slow fashion were based were on co-creation (Ertekin & Atik, 2015) involving the brand, the self, the environment and society. Rather

than consuming fashion to keep up with the trends presented to them (i.e. by brands or others in their social environment), or aiming to appease temporary self-identities (Binkley, 2008), the symbolic act of consuming slow fashion was more thoughtful, serving as a longer-term goal, or identity project (Belk, 1988).

4.4.3 Social Identity

Participants' self-identities of unique life experiences formed their lens of interpretation (McCracken, 1986). This lens was used to understand shared cultural viewpoints of fast and slow fashion. The cultural meanings attached to fast and slow fashion helped participants articulate their social identity objectives, comprising their sense of collective, social norms, social influence and societal structures and institutions (Jackson, 2005).

Fast Fashion

When participants engaged in fast fashion consumption, they exhibited high levels of social comparison. That is, they wanted others to recognise that they possessed socially desirable qualities.

> "You dress the way you want to be seen."
>
> [Lucy]

> "I think it's what you're wearing and how you are perceived."
>
> [Camille]

> "Basically, like I care what people think kind of thing. I don't know what the word for it is but yeah I care what you think of me so I am going to try be that person."
>
> [Natalie]

Participants made causal inferences of the behaviour of others in their social environment, and interpreted this behaviour to judge their own behaviour (Jackson, 2005). Resultantly, participants would often adopt similar fashion consumption practices in order to maintain a positive assessment of their own self-concept.

> "Well to me I try to blend into society and what everyone is wearing."
>
> [Ruby]

> "Maybe it's more blending in kind of thing."
>
> [Natalie]

> "You are wearing a lot of the time the same thing as most people on the street."
>
> [Camille]

In turn, participants used fast fashion to receive 'rewards' (Schwartz & Howard, 1982) from others in their social environment.

> "Hopefully someone will think I look really good."
>
> [Sylvie]

> "People might praise you like 'I really like what you're wearing' and then you feel really good."
>
> [Rachel]

Participants also used fast fashion to avoid negative judgement, or 'punishment' (Schwartz & Howard, 1982) from others in their social environment.

> "I've always had a problem standing out, like I always feel like everyone is judging me."
>
> [Ruby]

> "I guess it is kind of judgement."
>
> [Lucy]

One participant even suggested that the way that they presented themselves in public would be markedly different to that of how they presented themselves at home.

> "I think the way you dress and present yourself at home is a lot different to the face when you go out... I guess home you don't have to impress anyone and you feel more comfortable and you can be your complete self, whereas if you go out its maybe more the self you want people to see."
>
> [Bridgette]

Thus, social norms guided participants' fashion consumption practices. Fast fashion consumption behaviour was reinforced if participants gained favourable reaction from others (i.e. praise, liking, approval) and deterred unfavourable reaction from others (i.e. rejection, disapproval) (Bagozzi & Lee, 2012). Moreover, shared consumption symbols helped participants to identify and express group membership.

> "I guess people recognise that you know you share like interests, they recognise you're into the same kind of thing."
>
> [Lucy]

> "If I'm surrounded by people who are really into their fashion then I also want to fit in as well."
>
> [Ruby]

> "And I think if you dress too much, too different to them it's like '*are you part of this thing?*'"
>
> [Natalie]

Consumption behaviours were also reinforced by social influence, with participants actively opinion seeking from reference groups and media, allowing cultural meanings to transfer to participants (McCracken, 1986).

> "I always flick through Instagram and see what everyone is wearing... I see what others are wearing and then I try to make it my own."
>
> [Ruby]

> "I think a lot is influenced by what you see on TV and what you see in magazines."
>
> [Mattie]

This meant most participants were unlikely to engage in sustainable fashion consumption unless they perceived it to be acceptable and/or initiated by others in their social environment.

> "(Only) get an outfit my friends would agree with."
>
> [Camille]

> "And not be like 'oh wow why is she wearing that?' kind of thing."
>
> [Natalie]

> "If my friends were doing it, I would totally be in."
>
> [Ruby]

Therefore, participants often formed their social identity based on, and identified with, the majority (i.e. fast fashion), and would therefore adopt the behaviours practiced by others (i.e. purchasing fast fashion) (Barr, 2003) to convey socially desirable traits that were reinforced by society. This meant participants would be considered 'normal', rather than 'alternative', which participants typically associated with avoidance reference groups and unfavourable reactions from others.

Slow Fashion

When participants engaged in slow fashion consumption, they indicated that they continued to value self-consistency (e.g. Sirgy 1982, 1985). This meant that they aimed to represent themselves to others, and in turn be recognised by others, in a way that was consistent with their own self-concept. For example, several participants wanted others to recognise what they were wearing was unique from that of generic fast fashion offerings.

> "Because like I said slow fashion sort of sets you apart. And you sort of want others to think that too."
>
> [Lucy]

> "Slow fashion is special and thoughtful. So maybe you want others to think there is something different or more meaningful about what you are wearing rather than stuff you can grab at any mall."
>
> [Emiline]

Two participants suggested that such consumption decisions reflected one's upbringing. Therefore, they believed purchasing slow fashion would align with the values one had learned from their family.

> "I think depending on how you've been brought up. I feel like I've been brought up well by my parents. And I think obviously, I have been influenced by that... I know other people who maybe haven't had that same upbringing who therefore don't place so much emphasis on it."
>
> [Lucy]

> "It's to do with how you're brought up. It would be different if you weren't brought up with slow fashion."
>
> [Natalie]

One participant indicated that they felt pressure to make sustainable consumption decisions due to their cultural heritage. To not do so would be going against their sense of collective.

> "As a person and my values and my morals and also my culture like my background and those sorts of things preservation of that is really important to my people and important to me. So, I guess that's why I feel yeah I should look out for those sorts of things."
>
> [Mattie]

Interestingly, there was little discussion about social norms, social influence or group membership. Johnstone and Tan (2015) suggest this is because sustainable consumption is not yet considered a social norm. Participants reinforced this idea by explaining that others in their social environment were unlikely to have an awareness of slow fashion, and therefore could not necessarily recognise it or its value.

> "I think slow fashion can also be a peer group as well as fast fashion. It's just not as many people know about it."
>
> [Camille]

> "People can see it, but for (slow) fashion I guess they wouldn't, generally people wouldn't know."
>
> [Mattie]

> "I guess those people in the know would know where something has come from."
>
> [Bridgette]

Two participants alluded to the concept of 'meaning suppliers' (McCracken, 1986). That is, they believed they could potentially be leaders among their peer group to overturn established norms and change the common cultural meanings attached to fast and slow fashion by sharing their experiences with others.

> "I would feel good about having it (slow fashion) on me and I would probably tell people... because it's what morally is in me... I mean for my friends I would be like '*just to let you know this is* (slow fashion)'."
>
> [Mattie]

> "I would tell others of the story of that (slow fashion) and I would probably be proud to know the story as well."
>
> [Emiline]

However, doing so involved risking unfavourable reaction from others (Bagozzi & Lee, 2012). For example, disapproval or rejection.

4.4.4 Section Summary

The findings reveal that participants attached aesthetic, symbolic and cultural meanings to fast and slow fashion to articulate, or achieve, self-objectives of connection, self-identity and social identity. Participants sought to appropriate aesthetic meaning from fast and slow fashion consumption to achieve their connection objectives. Despite participants knowing they would experience prolonged satisfaction with slow fashion, participants desired the immediate gratification fast fashion afforded. In turn, participants forged different self-connections and relationships with fast and slow fashion. Relationships with fast fashion were highly emotive and obsessive, reinforced by participants' dependency on it to achieve their desired identities (Fournier, 1998). Conversely, relationships with

slow fashion had rich layers of meaning that benefitted the revelation of participants' authentic or 'true' self. Therefore, tensions arose due to participants being willing to accept adverse consequences (i.e. dissatisfaction, negative impact on environmental and social welfare), and make trade-offs because of the nature and terms of these relationships.

Participants sought to appropriate symbolic meaning from fast and slow fashion consumption to achieve their self-identity objectives. This meant participants consumed fashion in a way that was congruent with their self-image, self-concept, personal values and identity projects. Participants used fast fashion to construct a self-identity that would be favoured by others. The primary symbolic meaning of fast fashion for participants was that its changing nature aligned with their evolving, multiple selves (Binkley, 2008). Conversely, participants used slow fashion to achieve the most authentic or 'true' version of themselves. Therefore, tensions arose as participants had competing identities (i.e. temporary vs. authentic) that they were trying to attain and maintain.

The favourability of sustainable fashion consumption depended not only on participants' particular connection and self-identity objectives, but also their cultural background, social environment and commitment to environmental and social welfare (Cherrier, 2007; Stern & Dietz, 1994). Thus, participants sought to appropriate cultural meaning from fast and slow fashion consumption to achieve their social identity objectives. This meant that participants consumed fashion in a way that was congruent with social norms, social influence, and societal structures and institutions (Jackson, 2005). Participants used fast fashion to construct a social identity that would gain social approval. Conversely, participants used slow fashion to construct a social identity that allowed others to recognise their own self-concept. Therefore, tensions arose due to such social commitments, with participants at times trading-off their personal values and self-identity for social values and social identity (Connolly & Prothero, 2008) resulting in a difficulty to set parameters around sustainable fashion consumption practices.

Due to the presence of both fast and slow fashion in participants' lives, the way they used meanings to achieve self-objectives differed. This resulted in competing self-objectives, or goals. Therefore, these meanings significantly impacted participants' attitudes and actual consumption behaviour toward sustainable fashion consumption.

4.5 Attitudes

The findings switch to a focus on sustainable fashion consumption in terms of participants' fashion purchase decisions. The findings reveal three significant attitudes: concern for environmental and social welfare, and ability and responsibility to engage in sustainable fashion consumption. Participants had an awareness of the positive and negative impact fashion purchase decisions could have on environmental and social welfare. While participants agreed that concern for environmental and social issues was an attitude they 'should' have, and purchasing slow fashion was the 'right' thing to do, participants routinely engaged in fast fashion purchase decisions due to conflicting self-objectives. Participants also described barriers that impeded slow fashion adoption. These barriers created a perception of difficulty around slow fashion purchase decisions, resulting in an attitude of not having the ability to purchase or consistently purchase slow fashion. Participants also expressed confusion around who was responsible for the current state of the fashion system, and therefore who was responsible to initiate change.

4.5.1 Concern for Environmental and Social Welfare

As outlined in previous sections, participants had an awareness of the negative impact fashion purchase decisions could have on environmental and social welfare, such as environmental waste and sweatshop labour. In line with social cognitive theories (Bandura, 1999), participants believed that they 'should' or 'ought' to have concern for environmental and social welfare.

> "The world we live in is important and everyone should be conscious of it."
>
> [Sylvie]

> "You should think about the supply chain and you should think about where things come from."
>
> [Camille]

In turn, participants suggested that in knowing the impact that their fashion purchase decisions could have on environmental and social welfare, consuming slow fashion over fast fashion would be doing the 'right thing'.

> "I think it's like doing the right thing."
>
> [Rachel]

> "At least I know I'm doing something right."
>
> [Emiline]

However, even the participants who expressed high levels of concern towards environmental and social welfare admitted that their fashion consumption behaviour did not always reflect their beliefs.

> "Sometimes I just kind of forget where my ethics stand when I get caught up in the moment."
>
> [Natalie]

> "I think it's easy to forget when you're shopping the condition that these things come from."
>
> [Lucy]

Participants appeared to be engaged in an internal conflict between concern for environmental and social welfare and how they could benefit the self.

> "I feel like there is a conflict in me to purchase brands that I like that are more me, and whereas maybe I should (purchase slow fashion) ...but then I really like these brands. You know, those sorts of things. I am kind of... yeah its conflicting."

> "The right thing to do would be to get that option, but then I guess for me the image that I want or the image I want to, the person I want to be is different."
>
> [Mattie]

> "Just kind of sort of self-involved and only caring about how you look, maybe that is a bigger priority than the bigger picture."

> "To me it's a bit of a dilemma because at the same time that you want to kind of feel good about yourself, at what expense?"
>
> [Natalie]

Several participants went on to justify the use aspect of fast fashion. That is, linking purchase decisions to a physical need.

> "Are you really supposed to think about it that much when you just need a new t-shirt for the gym?"
>
> [Bridgette]

> "It's not somewhere that I prefer to shop but it was a need, not a want."
>
> [Camille]

Hence, participants actively avoided personal sacrifice. While participants expressed concern for environmental and social welfare, they indicated that this concern would often have little influence on their consumption behaviours.

> "There are reasons why I'm against it (fast fashion). I would buy it anyway, so why, it is just going against (my values) ..."
>
> [Rachel]

> "I think ultimately I don't really give it that much thought. I probably should... in terms of people who make it I don't think it's fair on them... but then it's like I said, it's obviously not a big enough concern for me not to purchase from fast fashion brands."
>
> [Lucy]

> "If it was something manufactured in a sweatshop... it probably wouldn't deter me from buying something."
>
> [Bridgette]

Therefore, the findings reveal that the drive to appropriate meanings from the act of consuming fashion to achieve self-objectives could at times outrank concern for environmental and social welfare.

4.5.2 Ability

Participants went on to describe perceived barriers that impeded slow fashion adoption. These barriers made participants believe that they did not have the ability to purchase, or

consistently purchase, slow fashion. Time and effort was a predominant barrier cited by participants.

> "For me I just don't have much time to like go out and seek out those companies because it's not convenient."
>
> "I have other things like my job and my studies, so it's just not that easy."
>
> [Rachel]

Price was another predominant barrier cited by participants. While the majority of participants professed that they aspired to become more sustainable, they believed they were inhibited by a high financial cost. Resultantly, participants alluded to having 'no other choice' than to purchase fast fashion.

> "It would be my preference if I could (afford it)."
>
> [Natalie]
>
> "If I had the ability to every single time yeah I would. Definitely."
>
> [Lucy]
>
> "It's kind of like if you have enough money of course you want to buy it."
>
> "You can't make the decision about fast or slow fashion if you don't have any money."
>
> [Rachel]

The perceived barriers described by participants correspond with the concept of perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1991). If participants believed they did not have the ability to purchase slow fashion, they were less likely to attempt it. This caused several participants to question whether they would be able to make a difference as an individual with their fashion purchase decisions.

> "It's like you're forced into it (purchasing fast fashion) because sometimes it's like what difference can you make."
>
> [Rachel]

> "Maybe they feel that one, the decision of one person isn't going to impact so what's the point?"
>
> [Lucy]

In turn, these participants believed they could not control their environment (i.e. others in their social environment, brands, government), which resulted in less commitment to purchase slow fashion (Bandura, 1991), or prevented adoption of sustainable fashion consumption.

> "It's just that, you know, everyone buys fast fashion."
>
> [Mattie]

> "It's like you're forced into it (fast fashion) because its everywhere."
>
> [Sylvie]

The findings reveal that participants used perceived barriers to sustainable fashion consumption (i.e. temporal and financial resources, social practices, their environment) to justify unsustainable consumption behaviour, conceal their desire to purchase fast fashion, and mitigate any negative effects to their self-concept, self-image and self-esteem. Ultimately, participants used moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999) to selectively suspend their internal self-regulatory standards. By doing so, participants avoided significantly changing their behaviour, and feeling like they had gone against their personal values, beliefs and attitudes.

4.5.3 Responsibility

The majority of participants suggested that the perceived need to continuously consume fashion was cultivated by fashion brands. Hence, these participants believed that brands were responsible for initiating and facilitating sustainable systems change.

> "And then to have that cycle of its only cool for three weeks then that's just encouraging that cycle."
>
> [Natalie]

> "So, in the company they are under, they need to be conscious of the environment and their products need to be conscious of the environment."
>
> [Mattie]

> "The organisation should be doing it themselves."
>
> [Rachel]

A smaller group of participants suggested that it was consumers' demand to consume that caused brands to respond with a quickened cycle of fashion. These participants believed it was consumers' responsibility to remedy this through slow fashion purchase decisions. By doing so, participants purported that brands would recognise and respond to the demand accordingly.

> "It all stems from the pressure of consumers."
>
> [Lucy]

> "I think people should put more pressure on them to change their ways."

> "If your customers value these things you will want to change your practices to suit your consumers."
>
> [Sylvie]

Both groups agreed that problems in the fashion system stemmed from a never-ending need for profit. In order to satisfy sales growth, brands searched for low-cost labour and cheap materials.

> "They are not thinking about other things. They are just moneymaking machines."
>
> [Emiline]

> "I guess it all comes down to like the scale of the business, trying to meet targets, profits, that kind of stuff."
>
> [Mattie]

Participants then expressed that the resulting environmental and social issues should be given attention. However, it was easier for most participants to put their individual goals ahead of collective goals due to a strong sense of disconnection from the issues.

> "That their desire for new clothes or cheap clothes outweighs any concern."
>
> [Lucy]

> "They feel their want or need for the item outweighs it... they kind of disassociate themselves from it."
>
> [Bridgette]

Thus, participants were unable to feel truly responsible for the effects fast fashion consumption had as they had not experienced the negative consequences first-hand. In particular, it was hard for participants to imagine the working conditions or provenance of garment workers.

> "Because well hey, if it's not sustainable but not affecting me, they don't see the direct consequences of what they are doing."
>
> [Emiline]

> "We don't have that kind of poor working condition in New Zealand, we're not so much exposed to that so it's not very close to home."
>
> [Lucy]

> "It happens on the other side of the world so it's too far removed to think about it."
>
> [Bridgette]

> "We don't see it. Out of sight out of mind kind of thing as well."
>
> [Sylvie]

Overall, the findings reveal that most participants displaced responsibility (Bandura, 1999) by avoiding feelings of responsibility for their own unsustainable consumption behaviour by assigning responsibility to others (i.e. brands). Other participants diffused responsibility by spreading the responsibility among others who engaged in the same

behaviour, or in this study, other consumers who purchased fast fashion. By displacing and diffusing responsibility, participants were able to minimise agential connections between their behaviour and their behaviour's consequences (Bandura, 1986, 1999, 2001).

4.5.4 Section Summary

The findings in this section reveal that participants' perceptions, personal values and beliefs manifested in three related attitudes: concern for environmental and social welfare, and ability and responsibility to engage in sustainable fashion consumption. Participants believed that they should have concern for environmental and social welfare, and that purchasing slow fashion was the 'right' thing to do. However, as participants significantly invested their self in fashion consumption, they at times conceded to purchasing fast fashion. Therefore, the meanings participants attached to fashion consumption in order to achieve self-objectives could at times outrank concern for environmental and social welfare.

Participants described perceived barriers that impeded slow fashion adoption. These barriers made participants believe they did not have the ability to purchase, or consistently purchase, slow fashion. Participants used the personal sacrifices they would have to make and the additional pressure sustainable fashion consumption would impose on their lives (i.e. time, effort) for 'inconsequential' results (i.e. unnoticeable impact on environmental and social welfare) to justify their unsustainable behaviour. Therefore, participants selectively suspended their internal self-regulatory standards (Bandura, 1999) in order to engage in unsustainable fashion consumption without feeling like they had gone against their personal values, beliefs and attitudes.

Furthermore, participants struggled to accept responsibility for their unsustainable fashion consumption behaviour, displacing and diffusing responsibility accordingly. By doing so, participants were able to minimise agential connections between their behaviour and their behaviour's consequences (Bandura, 1986, 1999, 2001).

4.6 <u>Behaviour</u>

In line with the findings of Moisander and Personen (2002), participants were often irrational with fashion consumption due to a disconnection between their values, attitudes and behaviour. The findings reveal that fashion purchase decisions were made with

varying levels of reflection. Fast fashion purchases proved to be spontaneous with little reflection, whereas slow fashion purchases involved high levels of reflection through thoughtful consideration. In turn, fashion purchase decisions were made with varying levels of consciousness. Fast fashion purchases were not always the result of a consciously perceived need, whereas slow fashion purchases combined attention, memory and awareness (Steen, 2007).

4.6.1 Reflection

Participants experienced varying levels of reflection when making fashion purchase decisions. Participants described particular emotional value in having no pre-shopping intentions, and were likely to engage in impulse purchases of fast rather than slow fashion. Fast fashion triggered feelings related to the senses (i.e. colours), learned positive feelings (i.e. excitement, joy) and cognitive feelings of ease and familiarity (Strack, et al., 2006). These feelings caused consumption behaviour to occur by stimulating a sudden and immediate urge to buy.

> "It was not a planned purchase, it was spontaneous."
>
> [Margot]

> "You don't take time to think about it and yeah it was impulse. I liked the colour and that was it."
>
> [Lucy]

> "I never have the intention to buy fast fashion, the need just strikes."
>
> [Camille]

Participants reiterated a need for novelty, and even discovery, by acquiring something new. However, the emotional experiences fast fashion afforded (i.e. immediate gratification) conflicted with participants' cognitive control.

> "I have an aim because I am sad and I am going to make myself happy so whatever looks good looks good and I would like to go away with something. It doesn't matter what."
>
> [Natalie]

Linking back to Attitudes, participants exhibited a lack of concern for long-term consequences (i.e. frequency of replacing clothing, impact on environmental and social welfare).

> "Fast fashion is like buy it, chuck it away, don't really care about it."
>
> [Rachel]

However, when purchasing slow fashion, participants noted more controlled purchase intentions by thoughtfully evaluating and considering purchase decisions.

> "I would put more thought into it."
>
> [Mattie]

> "You take time to decide whether to purchase or not."
>
> [Lucy]

> "You get over it. Yeah but I think I am happier for longer with slow fashion. You really think about it and you really love it and you're really happy."
>
> [Natalie]

Participants explained that they needed to think about slow fashion purchases before making them. This often resulted in a lack of immediate action due to participants entering a process of intending (Gollwitzer, 1991), with behaviour hinging on conditions that had yet not been met. For example, justification of financial cost. Reflection, then, was also accompanied by reasoning. Participants' slow fashion purchase decisions were ultimately the result of reasoning about the feasibility and desirability of a given action (Bandura, 1977; Strack, et al., 2006), involving actual or anticipated feelings (i.e. satisfaction) and factual knowledge about outcomes (i.e. impact on environment and society) and connection to the self (i.e. achievement of self-objectives).

4.6.2 Consciousness

Participants experienced varying levels of consciousness when making fashion purchase decisions. When purchasing fast fashion, participants were often unable to consciously identify the reasons for their fashion behaviour consumption.

> "I don't know because it's not conscious I don't think."
>
> [Natalie]

> "I don't actually always know why I buy it."
>
> [Camille]

This meant that participants often engaged in unconscious processes when purchasing fast fashion. Automatic processes carried out by the unconscious mind were driven by responses to stimulus cues within their contextual environment (i.e. clothing, social setting, store environment, marketing), which resulted in behavioural outcomes (i.e. purchase of fast fashion) (Martin & Morich, 2011). Such processes manifested as impulsive purchase behaviour, in addition to a lack of awareness and lack of perceived control over the shopping situation. In one example, participants engaged in behavioural mimicry, that is, copying the observable behaviour of those around them.

> "If I was walking down the street and I saw someone that I thought looked really good then for some reason it's almost like I take a mental note of that and when I am out shopping I will start putting together a similar outfit...like I have just realised I do that."
>
> [Rachel]

> "It's almost like I see people on the street wearing it. '*Oh, that looks pretty cool*.' And then I find myself if I have half an hour going and try it on."
>
> [Natalie]

In another example, participants engaged in non-conscious goal pursuit. That is, achievement of self-objectives. Similar to the findings of Dijksterhuis, Smith, van Baaren and Wigboldus (2005), participants' goal activation, setting and completion could occur without introspection. The stimulus cues within participants' contextual environment primed the activation of goal pursuit (Bargh, Chen & Burrows, 1996). Moreover, the proximity of stimulus cues strengthened participants' immediate responses.

> "I wasn't actually planning on buying anything. I just walked past and it sort of happened."
>
> [Lucy]

> "I don't make these decisions before I go. I'm in a shopping mall but I am not actually intending to go into the store. But I somehow end up buying a few things here and there."
>
> "When I get sucked in I can't leave. So, I continue shopping."
>
> [Emiline]

Conversely, participants were often able to identify why they purchased slow fashion, indicating higher levels of conscious information processing.

> "Its conscious."
>
> [Mattie]
>
> "You know what you want. It's a more important decision so you've got to consciously weigh up that decision."
>
> [Emiline]
>
> "You're thinking about your choices. You're being a conscious consumer."
>
> [Camille]

Participants asserted that sustainability was not an attribute that would always be considered when making a purchase. This attribute would need to be consciously processed as part of their evaluation and consideration of fashion purchase decisions.

> "I don't go '*I'm going to go and find me some slow fashion*.' You actually have to stop and think about it."
>
> [Mattie]
>
> "Like try be conscious of the environment, that is something that I would actively need to factor in."
>
> [Lucy]

Therefore, participants' conscious processing of slow fashion consumption closely related to their level of reflection. Participants actively weighed the benefits of slow fashion to their individual self, and also the collective good, as part of decision-making

and resulting behaviour. This afforded decisions that were more thoughtfully connected to representations of the self.

4.6.3 Section Summary

The findings reveal that participants engaged in fashion consumption behaviour with varying levels of reflection and consciousness. Fast fashion purchase decisions proved to be impulsive with little reflection, triggered by feelings related to the senses, learned positive feelings, and cognitive feelings of ease and familiarity (Strack, et al., 2006). Participants reiterated a need for novelty, with their consumption behaviour driven by the immediate gratification fast fashion afforded. Impulsive purchase decisions allowed participants to avoid reflection and negative situations, or acknowledging how fast fashion and their consumption behaviour contributed to environmental and social issues. Conversely, slow fashion purchase decisions involved high levels of reflection through consideration. Slow fashion consumption behaviour was the result of reasoning (Bandura, 1977; Strack, et al., 2006), whereby participants would assess the feasibility and desirability of behavioural outcomes based on actual and anticipated feelings, factual knowledge, and connection to the self.

In turn, fast fashion purchase decisions were often made without participants consciously perceiving a need. This indicated that automatic processes carried out by the unconscious mind were driven by responses to stimulus cues within their contextual environment (i.e. clothing, social setting, store environment, marketing), which resulted in behavioural outcomes (i.e. purchase of fast fashion, achievement of self-objectives) (Martin & Morich, 2011). Conversely, participants were often able to identify why they purchased slow fashion. This indicated that participants engaged in higher levels of conscious information processing. Participants actively weighed the benefits of slow fashion to their individual self, and the collective good, as part of decision-making and resulting behaviour. Overall, the findings illustrate that participants' behaviour (impulsive, reflective, unconscious, conscious) was driven by, and aligned with, the meanings appropriated from the act of consuming fast and slow fashion to achieve their self-objectives.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter detailed the findings of this present research study presented as four key themes: understanding, meanings, attitudes and behaviour. Participants' understanding of

the fast and slow fashion concepts (high vs. low understanding) and their perceptions of fast and slow fashion's characteristics (low vs. high price, low vs. high quality, high quantity vs. investment, unsustainable vs. sustainable) helped shape the meanings participants attached to the phenomena.

Participants sought to appropriate aesthetic, symbolic and cultural meanings from fast and slow fashion consumption to articulate self-objectives of connection, self-identity and social identity. While participants attached the same meanings to fast and slow fashion, the way participants used these meanings to achieve their self-objectives differed. This resulted in competing self-objectives, or goals. In turn, these meanings influenced participants' attitudes and behaviour toward sustainable fashion consumption.

Participants' attitudes toward sustainable fashion consumption comprised concern for environmental and social welfare, ability and responsibility. Participants' concern for environmental and social welfare at times conflicted with their self-objectives, and their perceived abilities and responsibilities. Thus, participants employed moral disengagement and displacement and diffusion of responsibility (Bandura, 1999), to separate their attitudes from their fashion consumption behaviour and its potential negative consequences.

Finally, participants engaged in fashion consumption behaviour with varying levels of reflection and consciousness. Participants' behaviour (impulsive, reflective, unconscious, conscious) was driven by the meanings appropriated from fast and slow fashion. Therefore, participants were unwilling to engage in sustainable fashion consumption if it did not align with, conflicted with, or threatened their self-objectives. This meant that participants would actively avoid negative consequences to their self-objectives, and at times make personal and societal trade-offs.

The findings illustrate that both fast and slow fashion impact the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption, and that meaning is inherent throughout decision-making. While the findings highlight many tensions and contradictions, they also offer a new way to explore, and potentially explain, the attitude-behaviour gap. The next chapter, Discussion and Conclusions, will use these themes to explicitly answer the research questions and provide additional insight into the study's central phenomena.

Chapter Five: Discussion & Conclusions

5.1. Introduction

This chapter first discusses the findings of this present research study as outlined in the previous chapter. To illustrate how it has fulfilled the research purpose and answered the research questions, the discussion considers previous research, and how this present research study both reaffirms and adds new insight to marketing knowledge. Conclusions are then drawn from the findings and discussion of findings to explain the theoretical, empirical and practical contribution of this study and its implications for marketing practitioners. Limitations of this study and directions for future research are also outlined.

Fast fashion business models that encourage unsustainable production practices and continuous consumption currently dominate the contemporary fashion system (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). The resulting negative environmental and social externalities, such as environmental degradation and violation of workers' rights, have sparked academic, industry and consumer interest in sustainability and the new movement of slow fashion (Ertekin & Atik, 2015). As slow fashion, and therefore sustainable fashion consumption, presents an opportunity to facilitate systems change, this present research study is needed (Bly, et al., 2015; McNeill & Moore, 2015).

While environmental and social issues are continuing to gain attention from consumers, a disparity between what consumers know, think, feel, believe, intend to do and actually do, is evident (Belk, et al., 2005). The fundamental challenge in the sustainable fashion consumption research domain is this disparity between consumers' sustainable attitudes and actual behaviour, termed the attitude-behaviour gap (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). Despite consumers expressing sentiment about sustainability, previous research indicates that consumers struggle to translate these attitudes into consumption practices (e.g. Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Chatzidakis, et al., 2007; Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008; Gupta & Ogden, 2009; Johnstone & Tan, 2015; Johnstone & Hooper, 2016). In terms of fashion, there is a significant tension between the allure of fast fashion, and consumers' concern for environmental and social welfare.

A plethora of previous research has sought to account for this gap, predominantly focussing on rational decision-making processes (e.g. Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Carrington, et al., 2010), individual factors (i.e. characteristics, demographics), situational factors (i.e. financial and temporal resources) and internal factors (i.e. perceptions, motivations), yet no definitive explanation has been found (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Johnstone & Tan, 2015). Consumers engage in consumption that has distinct symbolic and cultural meaningfulness that has been overlooked in sustainable fashion consumption research (Dolan, 2002). Previous research has also predominantly focused on 'green' consumers, rather than 'normal' consumers (Johnstone & Tan, 2015; Johnstone & Hooper, 2016), and therefore has not accounted for the presence of both fast and slow fashion in consumers' lives and its contribution to the gap. Every consumer fashion purchase decision has an impact on sustainability, whether that is through environmental or social implications (Young, et al., 2010). Hence, all consumers, rather than just 'green', 'ethical', or 'sustainable' consumers, have the potential to engage in sustainable fashion consumption, which is a particularly important perspective for effecting wider systems change.

Therefore, the attitude-behaviour gap remains a key area of concern for marketing academics and practitioners because consumers' fashion consumption behaviour remains predominantly unsustainable. This present research study is of critical importance as it takes a completely new approach to exploring the attitude-behaviour gap, offering new insight into understanding, predicting and influencing sustainable fashion consumption behaviour. To provide benefit to marketing academics and practitioners, this study's central purpose is to explore the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption by understanding the meanings consumers attach to fast and slow fashion. The research questions seek to answer different aspects of the research purpose to find out: RQ1 the meanings consumers attach to fast and slow fashion, RQ2 what the meanings articulate, RQ3 the personal and societal trade-offs consumers consider when adopting sustainable fashion consumption, and RQ4, how the meanings and articulations reconcile with consumers' personal belief systems.

The sum and discussion of the findings tell a story of how participants sought to appropriate aesthetic, symbolic and cultural meaning from fast and slow fashion consumption to achieve self-objectives of connection, self-identity and social identity. In turn, participants' concern for environmental and social welfare at times conflicted with

their self-objectives, ultimately effecting sustainable fashion consumption behaviour and the prospect of behavioural change.

5.2 Understanding Fast and Slow Fashion

The discussion commences by examining participants' understanding of the fast and slow fashion concepts, and their perceptual interpretations and judgements of the phenomena. Participants were familiar with, and had a sound understanding of, the fast fashion concept, indicating repeated experience and interaction with the phenomenon. For example, Mattie proposed that 'everybody' had heard of fast fashion. This alludes to the prevalence of fast fashion in today's society, and further, that fast fashion consumption is a socially accepted practice. This adds to the findings of previous research (e.g. Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006; Joy, et al., 2012) that suggests fast fashion brands have exploited socio-cultural trends and marketing communications to increase both knowledge and consumption of such product offerings.

Conversely, participants were generally unfamiliar with the slow fashion concept, indicating limited experience and interaction with the phenomenon. Several participants initially suggested that slow fashion was the opposite of fast fashion. When prompted with a definition of slow fashion, participants were able to establish a link between the concept and sustainability. However, in line with the findings of previous research (e.g. Bly, et al., 2015) participants found slow fashion to be ill-defined. For example, Rachel suggested that as the word slow inferred time, slow fashion was not the right terminology for the concept. Mattie offered that 'slow' could be replaced with 'conscious', with Sylvie adding that 'fashion' could be replaced with 'style'. Participants further suggested that the range of different terms used in marketing communications (e.g. 'eco' fashion, 'green' fashion, 'ethical' fashion, 'sustainable' fashion) added to the confusion. Thus, the findings reveal that unlike fast fashion, slow fashion is not an accepted social practice.

In turn, participants' understanding of the fast and slow fashion concepts informed their perceptual judgements and interpretations. Previous research has shown that perceptions are significantly linked to, and help shape, consumers' attitudes and behaviours (Ajzen, 1988, 1991) including those relating to sustainable consumption (e.g. Johnstone & Tan, 2015) and sustainable fashion consumption (e.g. Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). Participants perceived fast fashion to be low cost, trend-led and low quality, which made such product offerings accessible and acceptable to the majority of consumers.

Participants' perceptual interpretations of fast fashion's characteristics corresponded with their negative perceptual judgements about sustainability. For example, Lucy explained that low cost and low quality 'speaks volumes' about how and where fast fashion is made.

In terms of slow fashion, the confusion and contradictions participants expressed in their understanding of the concept caused them to create their own definitions. These definitions informed participants' perceptual interpretations, and in some instances participants' preconceptions, of what made fashion slow. Participants who had previously purchased slow fashion perceived that it was high price, high quality and classic, which made such product offerings inaccessible to the majority of consumers. Participants' perceptual interpretations of slow fashion's characteristics corresponded with positive perceptual judgements toward sustainability. Interestingly, participants who had not purchased slow fashion made similar inferences. This suggests that participants relied on information (which could be invalid or selective) from external sources and direct observations (e.g. others in their social environment, media, marketing communications) to form preconceptions that were potentially biased, self-serving or in contrast with reality (Ajzen & Cote, 2008). Therefore, limitations in participants' understanding and perceptions of slow fashion highlight the potential for misinformed attitudes and consumption behaviour to occur. For example, Ruby assumed that high price and high quality meant slow fashion was made sustainably, and Natalie questioned 'where else would the money be going?'

These findings are significant as they reveal that participants' understanding and perceptions of fast and slow fashion influenced the meanings participants then attached to fast and slow fashion and, in turn; formed the basis of participants' attitudes and behaviour toward sustainable fashion consumption.

5.3 RQ1 What meanings do consumers attach to fast and slow fashion? & RQ2 What do these meanings articulate?

To assist in answering RQ1 and RQ2 the meanings participants attached to fast and slow fashion, and what these meanings articulated, are discussed. The findings reveal that participants appropriated aesthetic, symbolic and cultural meanings from fast and slow fashion consumption to achieve self-objectives of connection, self-identity and social identity.

5.3.1 Aesthetic Meaning and Connection

Participants attached aesthetic meanings to fast and slow fashion, a new concept developed by this study, which articulated participants' connection objectives. Contemporary perspectives of aesthetics suggest that visual arts (including everyday objects such as fashion) create 'significant form', that is, a beautiful object conveys meaning (Eckman & Wagner, 1995). Aesthetics are particularly important (e.g. Joy, et al., 2012) and apparent in fashion objects, as they are constantly on display (Berger & Heath, 2007). In addition, fashion objects emanate meanings about the wearer to others and to reinforce those meanings to themselves (Belk, 1988). While extant literature has focused on aesthetic experience (e.g. Cupchik & Winston, 1996), aesthetic emotion (e.g. Cupchik & Gignac, 2007) or aesthetic product attributes (e.g. Holbrook, 1981), the findings of this study add to these perspectives by revealing participants appropriated aesthetic meaning in the act of consuming fast and slow fashion (McCracken, 1986). While aesthetic meaning is closely related to symbolic meaning, it is not merely symbolic constructions of aesthetic formations. Rather, it is how participants imagined and formed their aesthetic, existential circumstances to others and to themselves. For example, participants appropriated the perceived beauty and emotion of a fashion object (fast or slow fashion clothing) and transferred this meaning to their personal appearance and feelings.

The findings reveal that the aesthetics of both fast and slow fashion corresponded with participants' emotional responses. These findings are in line with previous research on the emotional component of consumer-object interaction, which suggests that emotion comprises both arousal and felt-experience (e.g. Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Fournier, 1991). In terms of fast fashion, participants described a strong initial emotional response to purchase, seen as immediate gratification. Therefore, fast fashion can be described as a high intensity object that is identified by emotional responses including excitement and enjoyment (Fournier, 1991). Such emotional experiences were not just the result of consumption, but rather the ends sought by consumption. Participants were satisfied with the experience of consuming fast fashion (purchase of products) but not the act of consuming it (possession and utilisation of products). For example, Rachel explained how the emotional experience of purchasing fast fashion made her feel 'really good', however her interaction with it later did not make her 'feel like anything'.

Conversely, slow fashion can be described as a low intensity object, characterised by a more 'simple' affective reaction (Fournier, 1991), or in this study, a more subdued initial emotional response. Participants were also satisfied with the experience of consuming slow fashion (however did not experience an emotional 'thrill'), and also the act of consuming it. For example, Sylvie explained how the emotional experience of purchasing slow fashion made her feel 'pretty good', and upon her interaction with it later she was 'still obsessed with it'. These consumption experiences indicate different levels and types of mental activity. For example, fast fashion relates more to emotional imagery and fantasy, whereas slow fashion relates more to right-brain processing (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982).

In turn, participants' emotional experience and interaction with fast and slow fashion also affected their emotional attachment to the phenomena (e.g. Holman, 1986; Shrimp & Madden, 1998; Holt, 2009) and therefore the connection and relationship formed. With fast fashion, the emotional experience did not last far beyond purchase. Thus, participants ultimately ended up feeling dissatisfied, indicating high levels of post-purchase dissonance. Dissatisfaction perpetuated a cycle of disposability and consumption; meaning participants did not develop a lasting connection with fast fashion clothing. Conversely, the emotional experience of slow fashion allowed for memorable ownership (e.g. Holt, 2009; Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013), with participants recalling positive memories of consumption. Participants agreed that slow fashion could be kept and used for a long time, which provided continued satisfaction. Thus, long-term possession of slow fashion clothing fostered emotional durability, whereby a different connection was formed.

Previous research has indicated that connection is particularly important where identity is concerned, expressing a significant aspect of self (e.g. Fournier, 1998). Although participants such as Emiline suggested that fast fashion was 'replaceable', this actually aligned with their need to achieve their desired selves (Kleine, et al., 1995). Conversely, participants' connection with slow fashion spanned temporal horizons (Fournier, 1998) by being nostalgic and allowing participants to revisit their past self, as well as contributing to their current and future selves (Kleine, et al., 1995). In line with Fournier (1998) the findings of this study indicate that the connection participants experienced then contributed to the development of a relationship between participants and fast and slow fashion. Self-connections with fast fashion supported relationship maintenance due to

feelings of dependency and interdependence to achieve desired identities (Fournier, 1998), resulting in tolerance of adverse circumstances. For example, the negative impact fast fashion has on environmental and social welfare, dissatisfaction, and the frequency of replacing clothing.

Conversely, participants developed durable relationship bonds with slow fashion, which resulted in rich layers of meaning that reflected love, trust, commitment and intimacy (Fournier, 1998). This benefitted the revelation of participants' authentic or 'true' self, which developed the relationship culture and supported relationship stability through sustained saliency over time. While the findings indicate high levels of personal dedication, participants did not profess investment-related commitment. For example, Emiline explained that she felt slow fashion was a 'part' of her, however did not suggest that she would never buy anything else. Therefore, despite participants knowing they would experience prolonged satisfaction with slow fashion, they still desired the emotional experience that the purchase of fast fashion afforded.

5.3.2 Symbolic Meaning and Self-identity

Participants attached symbolic meanings to fast and slow fashion, which articulated participants' self-identity objectives. As has been discussed in previous sections, consumers engage in consumption that has distinct symbolic meaningfulness in order to create, develop and foster their identities (Belk, 1988). Thus, an important underlying assumption of this present research study is that self-identity is a primary motivator of fashion consumption (e.g. Stets & Burke, 2002), as the drive to convey one's self is inextricably linked with the act of consumption (Elliott, 1997).

In line with self-consistency and self-enhancement theories (e.g. Sirgy, 1982, 1985) participants consumed fashion that aligned with their self-concept, self-image and self-esteem. Therefore, their preference for fast or slow fashion was determined by the personal values they possessed, or had activated at the time of purchase (Stets & Biga, 2003). Previous studies have defined values as the beliefs that pertain to desirable end states (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). Moreover, values often comprise the moral standards and principles that guide consumption behaviour and its outcomes (Manchiraju & Sadachar, 2014; Lundblad & Davies, 2016). Interestingly, participants were motivated by, or activated, different values when purchasing fast and slow fashion. These values related to concern for the self (egoistic), concern for the environment (biospheric) and

concern for others (social-altruistic) (e.g. Stern & Dietz, 1994). When purchasing fast fashion, participants were motivated by, or activated, self-enhancement values (Schwartz, 1992, 1994). Participants sought instant gratification and to conform to the consumption behaviour of others to gain social recognition. This afforded a positive assessment of their own self-concept (Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002). For example, Sylvie described how fast fashion was important as it kept her 'relevant'. Conversely, when purchasing slow fashion, participants were motivated by, or activated, self-transcendence values (Schwartz, 1992, 1994). Participants were others-orientated when purchasing slow fashion (Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002) meaning that they considered the environmental and social impact of fashion purchase decisions, as well as self-interests. For example, Emiline explained how purchasing slow fashion is 'helping others'.

Ultimately, participants' personal values and self-concept reflected an important part of their self-identity. Participants engaged in the act of consuming fast and slow fashion as a means of investing themselves in fashion objects. This then saw participants drawing value from their consumption experiences (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Holbrook, 1994) and the fashion objects consumed. Participants used fast fashion to construct self-identities that would be favoured by others. However, these self-identities were temporary (i.e. based on trends, social influence). Thus, the primary symbolic meaning of fast fashion was its changing nature aligned with, and immediately gratified, such self-identities. With new fast fashion styles swiftly superseding the old, participants could easily sustain their multiple selves in evolution (Binkley, 2008; Joy, et al., 2012). Interestingly, the nature of participants' relationship with fast fashion fostered a perpetual state of dissatisfaction over their self-perceptions. Participants' need to express their desired self-identities (Sirgy, 1982; Fournier, 1998) served as short-term goals, which caused them to further engage with materialism (Larsen, et al., 1999) to resolve such identity issues and projects (Belk, 1988).

Conversely, participants used slow fashion to achieve the most authentic or 'true' version of themselves. By developing meaningful relationships with slow fashion, participants experienced a sense of development in their personal growth and well-being. Similar to the findings of Fournier (1998) the self-concept of these participants continued to expand into new domains. In line with Belk (1988) slow fashion carried a sense of participants' past, who they were and where they were going. Therefore, participants' relationships with slow fashion were based on co-creation (Ertekin & Atik, 2015) involving the brand,

the self, the environment, and society. Rather than participants engaging in continuous consumption to construct and reconstruct temporary self-identities (Binkley, 2008) the symbolic act of consuming slow fashion was more thoughtful, serving as a longer-term goal, or identity project (Belk, 1988).

5.3.3 Cultural Meaning and Social Identity

Participants attached cultural meanings to fast and slow fashion, which articulated participants' social identity objectives. As has been discussed in previous sections, consumers' self-identity of unique, individual life experiences forms their lens of interpretation (McCracken, 1986). This lens is then used to understand shared cultural viewpoints. Thus, consumption is an individual experience as well as a social experience (Caru & Cova), which causes consumers to engage in consumption that has distinct cultural meaningfulness (Dolan, 2002). Consumers' social identity comprises aspects of their self-concept that stem from social experiences (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Johnstone & Hooper, 2016). This means consumers similarly seek to construct their social identity through consumption (Jackson, 2005). Thus, an important underlying assumption of this present research study is that social identity is a primary motivator of sustainable fashion consumption.

In line with previous research, participants consumed fashion that aligned with their self-concept. As some aspects of participants' self-concept stemmed from social experiences (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Johnstone & Hooper, 2016), their preference for fast or slow fashion was also guided by a collection of social practices, including social norms, social influences, and societal structures and institutions (Jackson, 2005). As participants interacted with others, their social environment inevitably influenced their individual consumption behaviour. In terms of fast fashion, participants exhibited high levels of social comparison. This meant that participants would make causal inferences of others' behaviour, and use these inferences to judge their own behaviour. In turn, participants would emulate the fashion consumption behaviours of those in their social environment to maintain a positive self-concept. For example, Ruby explained how she preferred wearing clothing that 'everyone is wearing'. Adding to previous research (e.g. Schwartz & Howard, 1982) social norms created perceived expectations for participants to look and dress a certain way. Therefore, as fast fashion brands reflect such socio-cultural factors in their product offerings (e.g. Bruce & Daly, 2006), purchasing fast fashion enabled participants to conform to social norms. Fast fashion consumption behaviour was

reinforced if participants gained favourable reaction from others (i.e. praise, liking, approval) and deterred unfavourable reaction from others (i.e. rejection, disapproval) (Bagozzi & Lee, 2012). Resultantly, shared consumption symbols and behaviours helped participants to identify and express group membership (e.g. McGarty & Turner, 1992). For example, Ruby elaborated that she used fast fashion to 'fit in'.

In terms of slow fashion, the findings were very contrasting. While participants indicated that they continued to value self-consistency (e.g. Sirgy, 1982, 1985) by others recognising their own self-concept, there was little discussion about social norms, social influence or group membership. Participants explained that others in their social environment were unlikely to have an awareness of slow fashion, and therefore would not recognise it or its value. For example, Mattie proposed that most people 'wouldn't know about it'. This mirrors the findings of Johnstone and Tan (2015), which suggest that sustainable consumption is not yet considered a social norm. Thus, participants did not perceive expectations to purchase slow fashion, and therefore such consumption behaviours were not reinforced by reward or punishment (Schwartz & Howard, 1982). However, participants alluded to the fact that slow fashion consumption involved risking unfavourable reaction from others (Bagozzi & Lee, 2012).

Overall, social norms and social influence contributed to the creation and development of participants' social identity. Participants indicated that consuming fashion was an important way to communicate and translate meaning with others (McCracken, 1986; Belk 1988). Thus, in terms of fast fashion, participants' social identity centred on social approval. Conversely, participants used slow fashion to construct a social identity that allowed others to recognise their authentic self. However, the findings reveal that it was important for participants to be able to judge their ability to relate to, and be accepted by, others in their social environment (Baker, Gentry & Rittenburg, 2005). As social norms reinforce the behaviours of society (e.g. Biel & Thøgersen, 2007) the ambiguities surrounding the social acceptance of slow fashion caused participants to at times trade-off their personal values and self-identity to benefit their social identity. This meant participants were more likely to identify with the majority (i.e. fast fashion) and therefore engage in consumption behaviours practised by others (i.e. purchasing fast fashion) (Barr, 2007) to convey socially desirable traits that were reinforced by society (i.e. being fashionable, fitting in). Further, identifying with the majority meant participants would be considered 'normal', rather than potentially 'alternative', which they typically

associated with avoidance reference groups (Banister & Hogg, 2004). Therefore, what participants perceived to be 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' influenced their ability to set parameters around sustainable fashion consumption practices.

5.3.4 Significance of Meanings and Self-objectives

The findings add to and extend previous research that suggests symbolic and cultural meaning (e.g. Levy, 1959; Solomon, 1983; McCracken, 1986) and self-identity (e.g. Belk, 1988; Sparks & Shepherd, 1992; Stets & Burke, 2002) contribute to, and help predict, sustainable fashion consumption behaviour independent from the influence of attitudes on behaviour (e.g. Sparks & Shepherd, 1992). Participants sought to appropriate aesthetic, symbolic and cultural meanings from fast and slow fashion to achieve self-objectives of connection, self-identity and social identity, answering RQ1 and RQ2. Thus, symbolic and cultural meaning, with the addition of aesthetic meaning, act as significant determinants of sustainable fashion consumption. Moreover, the favourability of sustainable fashion consumption depends not only on self-identity, but also connection and social identity objectives being fulfilled.

Due to the presence of both fast and slow fashion in participants' lives, the way they used meanings to achieve self-objectives differed. This resulted in competing self-objectives, or goals, helping to explain the tensions and contradictions highlighted by this study, and many others. For example, a participant who purchased both fast and slow fashion not only had competing temporary self-identities to satisfy (with the purchase of fast fashion) but also an authentic self-identity to satisfy (with the purchase of slow fashion). The meanings participants appropriated from the act of consuming fashion to achieve self-objectives influenced participants' attitudes and behaviour, which will be discussed in the following sections. Therefore, these factors also form the basis for answering RQ3 and RQ4.

5.4 RQ3 What are the personal and societal trade-offs consumers consider when adopting sustainable fashion behaviours? & RQ4 How do these meanings and articulations reconcile with consumers' personal belief systems?

To assist in answering RQ3 and RQ4, participants' attitudes toward sustainable fashion consumption, and their effect on sustainable fashion consumption behaviour, are discussed. Participants' perceptions, values and beliefs manifested in three related attitudes: concern for environmental and social welfare, and ability and responsibility to

engage in sustainable fashion consumption. In line with social cognitive theories (Bandura, 1999) participants believed that they 'should' or 'ought' to have concern for environmental and social welfare. Such beliefs fostered an attitude which reflected this concern. Thus, moral agency was part of participants' self-directedness (Bandura, 2001). Participants engaged in moral reasoning, which was translated into self-regulatory mechanisms. That is, participants made moral judgements of rightness and wrongness of fashion consumption behaviour and evaluated these judgements against their personal standards, self-sanctions and situational circumstances. Participants believed that in knowing the impact their fashion purchase decisions could have on environmental and social welfare, consuming slow fashion over fast fashion would be doing the 'right' thing. However, as participants had significantly invested their 'self' in fashion consumption, they at times conceded to behaviours they considered to be 'wrong', or purchased fast fashion.

The findings indicate that achievement of self-objectives acted as personal goals stemming from participants' value system and identity, giving fashion consumption meaning and purpose. Bandura (2001) explains that goals do not automatically activate self-influences that direct motivation and actions. Rather, participants enlisted self-evaluative engagement, and were incentivised to attain such goals to gain self-satisfaction and a sense of self-worth. However, as the way participants used the meanings appropriated from consuming fast and slow fashion to achieve their self-objectives differed (i.e. temporary self-identities vs. authentic self-identity), participants' goals also differed in terms of temporal proximity, specificity and level of challenge. Moreover, the presence of both fast and slow fashion in participants' lives resulted in competing self-objectives, or goals. Fast fashion goals were not projected far into the future - they were essentially immediate. Thus, fast fashion consumption comprises proximal sub-goals that activate self-influences and direct the behaviour of the 'here and now'. Conversely, slow fashion goals were projected further into the future. Thus, slow fashion consumption comprises more distal goals that set the direction of pursuits. Resultantly, participants' sustainable attitudes at times conflicted with the achievement of their self-objectives. For example, Mattie believed purchasing slow fashion was the 'right' choice, however the 'image' or 'person' she aspired to be was different. Therefore, the self-objectives of slow fashion often proved too far removed to provide incentives for present action, meaning participants conceded to competing goals at hand, or the self-objectives of fast fashion.

Participants described perceived barriers that impeded slow fashion adoption and consumption. These barriers made participants believe they did not have the ability to purchase or consistently purchase slow fashion. In line with previous research, participants cited time and effort (e.g. Young, et al., 2010) and financial cost (e.g. Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Participants claimed that they aspired to be more sustainable, yet had 'no other choice' than to engage in unsustainable fashion consumption. For example, Lucy suggested that if she 'had the ability every single time' she would always purchase slow fashion. However, participants overlooked the considerable time, effort and financial cost they exerted in continuously consuming, and replacing, fast fashion in the long-term.

The perceived barriers to sustainable fashion consumption correspond with the concept of perceived self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) proposes that the most pervasive beliefs are those of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the core belief that one has the power, or ability, to achieve the desired outcome of one's actions. Otherwise, there is little incentive to act. For example, if participants believed they did not have the ability to purchase slow fashion, they were less likely to attempt it. Several participants questioned whether they would be able to make a difference as an individual with their fashion purchase decisions. For example, Rachel asked 'what difference can you make?', with Lucy adding 'the decision of one person isn't going to make an impact, so what's the point?'. This lead participants to believe they could not control their environment (i.e. others in their social environment, brands, government) which resulted in less commitment to purchase slow fashion (Bandura, 1991) or prevented adoption of sustainable fashion consumption. For example, Sylvie explained that she felt 'forced into' purchasing fast fashion 'because it's everywhere'. In line with previous research, participants felt disheartened because sustainable fashion consumption appeared to be beyond their control and resources (Shaw & Clarke, 1999). Therefore, practical and external constraints to participation were de-motivating and disempowering (Moisander, 2007).

Participants used the personal sacrifices (i.e. time, effort) they would have to make, and the additional pressure sustainable fashion consumption would impose on their lives, to justify their unsustainable fashion consumption behaviour. One explanation offered by extant literature is that consumers use neutralisation techniques (Sykes & Matza, 1957) to rationalise behaviours that are inconsistent with their core personal values, beliefs and attitudes (Chatzidakis, et al., 2007). Neutralisation techniques allow consumers to tolerate

compromises to their personal values, beliefs and attitudes by balancing 'right' (i.e. sustainable) and 'wrong' (i.e. unsustainable) consumption behaviour. However, rather than simply neutralising attitudinally-incongruent consumption behaviour, participants suspended their internal self-regulatory standards to avoid significantly changing their behaviour. This is also known as moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999) whereby participants could continue unsustainable fashion consumption practices without feeling like they had gone against their personal values, beliefs and attitudes. Moreover, this allowed participants to mitigate any negative effects to their self-concept, self-image and self-esteem.

Participants also expressed confusion about who was responsible for the current state of the fashion system, and therefore who was responsible to initiate and facilitate sustainable systems change. For example, Rachel believed that brands should engender change, whereas Sylvie believed that consumers should change their consumption behaviour to 'put pressure' on brands to change. Participants were able to put their individual goals ahead of collective goals due to a strong sense of disconnection from environmental and social issues (Johnstone & Tan, 2015). Construal level theory contributes an explanation of this phenomenon, whereby the psychological distance of an event equates to various levels of abstraction (Trope, Liberman & Wakslak, 2007). Consumers tend to think of an event abstractly if they indirectly experience it, whereas they think of an event in contextualised terms if they directly experience it (Johnstone & Hooper, 2016). In this study, participants were unable to feel truly responsible for the effects of fast fashion as they had not experienced the negative consequences first-hand. For example, Bridgette explained that fashion-related social issues happen 'on the other side of the world so it's too far removed to think about it'. Overall, the findings reveal that most participants displaced responsibility (Bandura, 1999) by avoiding feelings of responsibility for their own unsustainable consumption behaviour by assigning responsibility to others (i.e. brands). Other participants diffused responsibility by spreading the responsibility among others who engaged in the same behaviour, that is, other consumers who purchased fast fashion.

These findings are significant as the theories of moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999) and displacement of responsibility have been widely used to explore deviant behaviour, but not sustainable consumption or sustainable fashion consumption. Participants used moral disengagement, and displaced and diffused responsibility, to maintain their

sustainable attitudes and minimise agential connections between their behaviour and their behaviour's consequences (Bandura, 1986, 1999, 2001), answering RQ4. Participants made personal (i.e. decisions that compromised personal values, beliefs and attitudes) and societal (i.e. decisions that compromised environmental and social welfare) trade-offs to achieve self-objectives that served as goals, answering RQ3. Furthermore, participants carried out such behaviour with varying levels of reflection and consciousness, which will be discussed in more detail in the following section. The theories of the impulsive and reflective system (e.g. Strack, et al., 2006) and unconscious and conscious processes (e.g. Martin & Morich, 2011) have also not been applied to sustainable consumption or sustainable fashion consumption behaviour.

5.5 Implications for Marketing Practitioners

This study provides insights that will help marketing practitioners to learn about consumers' behaviour in the emerging area of slow fashion and sustainable fashion consumption. Consumers engage in fast and slow fashion consumption with varying levels of reflection and consciousness. This study confirms that fast fashion purchases are made impulsively (e.g. Fernie & Sparks, 1998) with little reflection. Previous research indicates that the impulsive system is a network of information which is processed automatically through a quick, coordinated spread of activation along associative links between contents (Strack, et al., 2006). Consumers' impulsive systems are patterns of activation in an associative network that represent environmental regularities. Whether links between contents are established, or strengthened, depends on temporal and spatial proximity. Moreover, consumption behaviour in response to stimuli often become incorporated into associative clusters. Thus, the impulsive system is thought to work akin to a simple memory system (e.g. Johnson & Hirst, 1991) that fosters enduring, nonpropositional representations of the archetypical components of an environment (e.g. Smith & DeCoster, 2000).

Fast fashion triggers feelings related to the senses (i.e. colours), learned positive feelings (i.e. excitement, joy, immediate gratification) and cognitive feelings of ease and familiarity (Strack, et al., 2006). Such feelings stimulate a sudden and immediate urge to purchase fast fashion (e.g. Beatty & Ferrell, 1998). Therefore, the emotional experience fast fashion affords conflicts with consumers' cognitive control. In an example from this study, Camille proposed that she 'never' had any 'intention' to purchase fast fashion, 'the need just strikes'. This means that consumers' sensory and motor representations that take

place during their initial experience with fast fashion form an associative cluster which represents the phenomenon. When consumers encounter similar situations, this associative cluster is activated, and stimulates anticipatory reactions (i.e. excitement, joy, immediate gratification). In addition, consumers' behavioural schemata that relates to fast fashion are also activated (Strack, et al., 2006). However, this means that a changed evaluation (i.e. of fast fashion) will not immediately result in new behavioural decisions and actions. Changes to behaviour develop through mechanisms of slow learning.

Conversely, slow fashion purchase decisions involve high levels of reflection. Previous research suggests that the reflective system carries out rule-based reasoning and symbol manipulation (Strack, et al., 2006). Consumers' reflective systems generate explicit judgements and decisions, such as overcoming habits or courses of action in new situations or environments (e.g. Lieberman, 2003). To carry out such functions, symbolic representations form the basis of reflective processes. These are re-representations of concepts accumulated by the impulsive system. The reflective system combines the original meaning of symbols with new meaning from relations with phenomena (i.e. like, dislike, trust, distrust) (Hummel & Holyoak, 2003). This means that symbolic representations need to be reiterated during consumption, therefore activating corresponding concepts from the impulsive system.

Slow fashion consumption behaviour is the result of thoughtful evaluation (Bandura, 1977; Strack, et al., 2006). Consumers assess the feasibility and desirability of decision outcomes based on actual or anticipated feelings (i.e. long-term satisfaction), factual knowledge about outcomes (i.e. impact on environmental and social welfare) (Strack, et al., 2006), and connection to the self. For example, Mattie described putting 'more thought' into slow fashion purchases, with Natalie adding that by doing so she was 'really happy' with her decision. When consumers are exposed to slow fashion, an associative cluster is similarly activated. However, additional elements associated with the phenomenon (i.e. impact on environmental and social welfare, achievement of self-objectives) are activated and used for further reasoning. This means slow fashion consumption is fundamentally different from that of fast fashion, as it uses inferential processes, rather than simply activating associations in memory. Inferential processes of the phenomenon create knowledge about the outcomes or consequences of behaviour. In turn, such knowledge is used to form a behavioural decision, that is, whether or not to purchase slow fashion. Therefore, a changed evaluation (i.e. slow fashion) can

immediately result in new behavioural decisions and actions. While reflection enables flexibility in behaviour, it operates slowly, meaning it can be affected by intention and disrupted by other processes (Strack, et al., 2006).

In turn, fashion purchase decisions are made with varying levels of consciousness. When purchasing fast fashion, consumers are often unable to consciously identify the reasons for their consumption behaviour. This suggests that such behaviour is not always the result of a consciously perceived need. Thus, the findings reveal that unconscious processes are often at play when consumers purchased fast fashion. For example, Camille offered that she did not 'always know why' she bought fast fashion, with Natalie adding 'it's not conscious'. Martin and Morich (2011) posit that unconscious behaviour does not direct conscious introspection. Automaticity carried out by the unconscious mind triggers automatic processes that result in an outcome. Bargh (1994) offers that automatic behaviour comprises four elements: lack of awareness, unintentional initiation, efficiency and effortlessness, and occurring outside of personal control. However, not all four elements need to be present for an automatic process to occur.

Unconscious processes are driven by responses to stimulus cues within consumers' contextual environment (i.e. clothing, social setting, store environment, marketing), which then result in behavioural outcomes (i.e. purchase of fast fashion) (Martin & Morich, 2011). Linking back to consumers' level of reflection, automatic processes manifest as impulsive purchase behaviour, in addition to a lack of awareness and lack of perceived control over the shopping situation. In this study, participants engaged in the automatic process of behavioural mimicry, with participants copying the observable behaviour of those around them. This perception of others' behaviour influences product preferences, and therefore impacts fashion consumption behaviours. For example, Rachel described this phenomenon as a 'mental note' which drove her to purchase similar fast fashion clothing to others. Only by discussing it with the researcher did she 'realise' she was carrying out such behaviour.

Consumers also engage in non-conscious goal pursuit. That is, achievement of self-objectives. Similar to the findings of Dijksterhuis et al. (2005), consumers' goal activation, setting and completion often occurs without introspection. Just as the goal of driving to work is thought to happen automatically (Bargh, 2002) the stimulus cues within consumers' environment often prime the activation of goal pursuit (Bargh, et al., 1996).

The proximity of stimulus cues also strengthens consumers' immediate responses. For example, Emiline described making a fast fashion purchase when she had no intention to do so, let alone enter a fast fashion store. This means that fast fashion and its related marketing act as stimulus cues, at times dictating consumers' fashion consumption behaviour. In another instance, Emiline maintained that she got 'sucked in' by fast fashion stores and had no choice but to continue shopping. However, such behaviour appeases consumers' ephemeral self-objectives.

Conversely, consumers are often able to consciously identify the reasons for their slow fashion consumption behaviour. In this study, participants described slow fashion purchase decisions as 'conscious', and reinforced the need to 'think' or 'weigh up' such choices. This is not to say that consumers do not engage in unconscious processes when purchasing slow fashion. Rather, the findings indicate that higher levels of conscious information processing occur (Martin & Morich, 2011). Steen (2007) proposes that consciousness is a combination of perception, attention, and awareness. Ekstrom (2004) adds such awareness occurs in the present moment. This means that one will be aware of their consciousness. While consciousness is subjective, it is generally experienced as a continuous stream of mental activity (James, 1890/1950). Consumers will often perceive stimuli without conscious awareness until they focus their attention to a particular sense. Selective attention, then, allows consciousness to be illustrated.

Consumers need to consciously process, or focus on, sustainable considerations (i.e. impact on environmental and social welfare) as part of their evaluation of fashion purchase decisions. For example, Mattie explained that she would not automatically be looking to purchase slow fashion (in terms of its sustainable attributes) if she perceived a need or want for new clothing. She would have to 'stop and think about it'. Lucy added that to be 'conscious' of environmental and social welfare with her fashion purchase decisions, she had to 'actively factor it in'. Thus, conscious processing of sustainable fashion consumption closely relates to consumers' level of reflection. Consumers weigh the benefits of slow fashion to the self, and the collective good, as part of decision-making and behavioural outcomes.

Marketing practitioners must reposition the current discourses of slow fashion and sustainable fashion consumption to help shape the way consumers understand and engage with the phenomena. However, traditional marketing approaches that use rational

knowledge (i.e. links between fashion consumption and its impact on environmental and social welfare) alone are unlikely to cause long-term changes to behaviour. This study reveals that behaviour (impulsive, reflective, unconscious, conscious) is driven by, and aligns with, the meanings appropriated from the act of consuming fast and slow fashion to achieve self-objectives. Therefore, marketing practitioners must make strategic adjustments by also aligning marketing decisions (i.e. brand, product, communication) to meanings (aesthetic, symbolic, cultural) and self-objectives (connection, self-identity, social identity). Doing so would help guide and encourage consumers' adoption of sustainable fashion practices, dissuade fast fashion and unsustainable fashion practices, and reinforce conscious decision-making and relationships with consumption and brands respectively. Interestingly, this would include both borrowing from and challenging the efforts of, and meanings attached to, fast fashion.

5.6 Contributions of this Research

This study took a completely new approach to exploring the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption by seeking to understand the meanings that 'normal' consumers attach to fast and slow fashion. In turn, the findings yield many completely new and surprising insights that increase our knowledge of the attitude-behaviour gap and sustainable fashion consumption research domain, forging the way for more conscious business, marketing and consumption practices. Therefore, this study contributes to both research in marketing and the practice of marketing. Contributions of this research are threefold: theoretical, empirical and practical (Ladik & Stewart, 2008). These contributions will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

5.6.1 Theoretical Contribution

The sustainable fashion consumption research domain is currently under researched, meaning this study significantly adds to and extends previous fashion, sustainable consumption and sustainable fashion consumption literature. The findings of this study reveal that consumers appropriate aesthetic, symbolic and cultural meanings from fast and slow fashion to achieve self-objectives of connection, self-identity and social identity. However, the way consumers use meanings to achieve self-objectives differs, resulting in competing self-objectives or goals.

Consumers believe purchasing slow fashion is the 'right' thing to do. However, as consumers significantly invest their self in fashion consumption they at times concede to

behaviours they consider to be 'wrong', that is, purchasing fast fashion. Consumers engage in automatic information processing, and therefore low levels of reflection and consciousness, when making fast fashion purchase decisions. This allows consumers to disengage their attitudes, or suspend their self-regulatory mechanisms, from their behaviour, and their behaviour's potentially negative consequences (Bandura, 1986, 1999, 2002). Conversely, consumers engage in high levels of reflection and conscious information processing when making slow fashion purchase decisions. Therefore, consumers' self-regulatory resources provide the basis for said decisions by 'pushing' behavioural schemata above the threshold (Vohs, 2006), providing self-guides for slow fashion consumption. This affords decisions that are more thoughtfully connected to representations of the self. However, such schemata needed a source of energy to be activated. This means consumers will at times make personal and societal trade-offs to avoid negative consequences to their self-objectives.

Therefore, this study illustrates that meanings are used to define and orientate consumers' fashion consumption behaviour. Meanings are inherent throughout, and add more complexity to, the decision-making process. Hence, this study is of critical theoretical importance as it has developed new conceptual links between established theories and unique insights that help to explore and explain why consumers continue to behave in ways that are inconsistent with their attitudes.

5.6.2 Empirical Contribution

To contribute empirically, this study collected real world data in an authentic research setting. Conducting research in New Zealand provides contextual value which grounds the findings in a specific culture. In addition, this study uses participants' experiences with the phenomena of interest to provide descriptive and observable evidence, rather than anecdotal proof. The conclusions then drawn yield answers that significantly assist specific marketing problems in these categories.

5.6.3 Practical Contribution

Practically, the findings are of interest to many stakeholders including marketers, social marketers, fashion brands, retailers, policymakers, ethical advocates and consumers. The implications of the findings contribute workable insights and recommendations for strategic adjustments that start to speak to and inform thinking. In particular, repositioning slow fashion and sustainable fashion consumption, and appealing to

meanings and self-objectives, can benefit more conscious business, marketing and consumption practices.

Such insights and adjustments not only benefit slow fashion and sustainable fashion consumption, but also challenge fast fashion and unsustainable fashion consumption. While slow fashion is not as easy to translate into money-making in the here and now, fast fashion is finite. The negative environmental and social externalities caused by fast fashion result in economic issues that, if not rectified, will prove to be our greatest business challenges in the coming decades (Minney, 2016). Not to mention, academics, practitioners and consumers are becoming increasingly dissatisfied by 'conventional' approaches to fashion.

Therefore, all players in the fashion industry need to work towards creating effective business practices, models and policies that are positively impactful to environmental, social and economic welfare. This includes moving away from ever-changing trends and taking a fresh approach to marketing decisions, improving transparency, reducing the resources used, ensuring safe working conditions, developing communities and inspiring conscious consumer decision-making and relationships. Doing so would not only effect wider systems change and help to level the playing field, but also provide long-term competitive advantage in the marketplace.

5.7 Limitations

While this study has significantly contributed to knowledge, it is important to recognise its potential limitations. Caution is given to the sampling method, sample size and participant selection criteria. This study was exploratory in nature, employing a non-probability sampling approach to select ten participants from New Zealand who had individually experienced the study's central phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). However, for the findings of this study to be statistically representative of the total population a larger, more diverse, random sample would be needed (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, generalisability of the findings is neither possible nor expected.

Caution is also given to social desirability and researcher bias, considered prominent in research with ethical or sustainable considerations (e.g. Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). Participants may have overstated their attitudinal preferences and purchase intentions toward sustainable fashion consumption behaviour in order to appear socially responsible

(e.g. Hiller, 2010). Further, the researcher may have projected their assumptions about the study's central phenomena during data collection (Moustakas, 1994; Munhall, 1994) and data analysis (Huberman & Miles, 2002). Practical steps were taken to mitigate against such eventualities, however the potential for biases cannot be completely removed.

5.8 Directions for Future Research

This study provides a fruitful starting point for consumer behaviour research in the area of sustainable fashion consumption. Several directions for future research are suggested. First, products such as clothing have traditions, ideals and rituals that feature in acts of consumption (McCracken, 1986). Thus, meanings are also appropriated from products to complete rituals and ritualised behaviour, including possession, exchange, grooming and divestment. Future research should explore the consumption rituals of fast and slow fashion, as such behaviour functions as a meaning source.

Meanings of products are attached to individual brands, indicating that meanings are also managed, transferred and communicated through the consumption of brands (e.g. McCracken, 1986). Moreover, brands reflect and represent the meanings consumers see in products. To better understand the meanings attached to fast and slow fashion, the role and influence of specific brands should be explored. As this study suggests that meanings should underlie marketing strategy, future research should also explore brands that make strategic adjustments to align marketing decisions (i.e. brand, product, communication) with these factors, and how doing so impacts consumer attitudes and behaviour.

This study illustrated the presence and potential impact of relationships on fashion consumption behaviour. Relationships are multiplex and process phenomena involving reciprocal exchange between active and interdependent partners and the provision of meanings to those who engage them (Fournier, 1998). In order to better understand sustainable fashion consumption, the relationships consumers seek and value with fast and slow fashion should be further explored. Moreover, this should also be explored with specific brands as relationship partners.

Finally, different research approaches should be employed. Future research should apply the meanings and self-objectives identified by this study to new contexts and settings. Future research should explore comparative studies of different cultural settings (i.e. New

Zealand and United States), as culture plays an important role in consumption by influencing internalised meaning and decision-making outcomes (Solomon, 2004). Future research should also explore different industries (i.e. beauty and personal care, health and wellness) and product categories (i.e. high and low involvement, product and service), as it may illuminate the wider impact and process of meaning transfer. Furthermore, a longitudinal approach to examining fast and slow fashion consumption is needed, as meanings, self-objectives, attitudes and behaviour are likely to change over time.

5.9 Conclusions

This thesis aimed to explore the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption by understanding the meanings consumers attach to fast and slow fashion. This research problem is important as the attitude-behaviour gap is considered the fundamental challenge of the sustainable fashion consumption research domain. The study found that consumers appropriate aesthetic, symbolic and cultural meanings from fast and slow fashion to achieve self-objectives of connection, self-identity and social identity. However, the way consumers use meanings to achieve self-objectives differs, resulting in competing self-objectives or goals. In turn, consumers use moral disengagement, and displace and diffuse responsibility, to maintain their sustainable attitudes and minimise agential connections between their behaviour and their behaviour's consequences. Consumers also make personal and societal trade-offs in order to achieve self-objectives.

Therefore, consumers' behaviour (impulsive, reflective, unconscious, conscious) is driven by, and aligns with, the meanings appropriated from the act of consuming fast and slow fashion. Previous research that has painted a picture of rational decision-making processes has removed, or at least significantly minimised, such variables influencing or motivating behaviour. This study illustrates that consumers' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour (or goals) can be changed or modified through meanings and self-objectives. Moreover, such factors can impact beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour (or goals) outside of consumers' conscious control. These new insights increase our knowledge of the attitude-behaviour gap and sustainable fashion behaviours, forging the way for more conscious and positively impactful business, marketing and consumption practices.

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Appendices

Appendix A *Participant Information Sheet*

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:
1 May 2016

Project Title
I Shop, Therefore I am

An Invitation
My name is Ellie Descatoires and I am a Master of Business student at AUT with the department of Marketing, Advertising, Retailing and Sales. I am inviting you to participate in my research to assist with the completion of my thesis. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of data collection.

What is the purpose of this research?
Fashion exists in various aspects of our lives, such as the clothes we choose to wear, meaning that it plays an essential role in shaping our consumption behaviours. Fashion clothing cycles have become increasingly rapid; known as the 'fast fashion' business model. However, a new movement of 'slow fashion' seeks to counteract this. This research aims to explore the attitude-behaviour gap in relation to sustainable fashion consumption, that is, peoples' attitudes and actual shopping/purchase behaviours. To do so, this study also aims to understand the meanings people attach to fast and slow fashion.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?
As someone I know who has experience with fast and slow fashion, I have identified you as someone who can talk to me about your experiences with fast and slow fashion.

What will happen in this research?
If you choose to participate I would like to interview you for about one hour to get your opinions and experience with fast and slow fashion, the meanings and beliefs that you associate with fast and slow fashion, and how you may use fast and slow fashion. I will then take your interview transcript and analyse it for any themes that may help me to understand peoples' attitudes and behaviour towards sustainable fashion consumption, and the meanings people attach to fast and slow fashion.

What are the discomforts and risks?
There should be no discomfort or risks involved. You are welcome not to share any opinions or experiences that make you feel uncomfortable.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?
If you do feel uncomfortable, you are welcome to stop the interview straight away.

What are the benefits?
For you, the benefits of this research include sharing your opinions and experiences to help gain a better understanding of fashion consumption. You may get a better understanding of why you behave as you do. You will also receive a copy of a synopsis of the final research report, and a $50 Visa Prezzy gift card for your participation.

I am conducting this research as part of a thesis, the completion of which will hopefully result in the attainment of a Master's Degree. I also hope to gain a greater understanding of this research topic.

How will my privacy be protected?
Once I have typed up your interview I will remove your name from it, as well as anything else that may identify you or other people, by giving people false names. Any confidential information will not be used in the research without permission.

What are the costs of participating in this research?
One hour of your time.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?
Please let me know within one week if you would like to participate or not.

How do I agree to participate in this research?
If you would like to participate, please let me know via email and I will send you a **Consent Form** to fill in before we set a date for the interview.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?
I will send you a summary of the findings if you would like me to. This would need to be indicated on your **Consent Form**.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?
Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr. Katherine Jones, *katherine.jones@aut.ac.nz*, +649 921 9999 ext. 5036.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz*, +649 921 9999 ext. 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?
Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the **Consent Form** for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:
Ellie Descatoires, *ellie.descatoires@gmail.com*.

Project Supervisor Contact Details:
Dr. Katherine Jones, *katherine.jones@aut.ac.nz*, +64 9 921 9999 ext. 5036.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 27 April 2016. AUTEC Reference number 16/124.

Appendix B *Consent Form*

Consent Form

Project title: ***I Shop, Therefore I am***
Project Supervisor: ***Dr. Katherine Jones***
Researcher: ***Ellie Descatoires***

- ○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the **Information Sheet** dated 1 May 2016.
- ○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ○ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ○ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time prior to the completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ○ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ○ I agree to take part in this research.
- ○ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes○ No○

Participant's signature: .....……..

Participant's name: .....……..

Participant's Contact Details:

……..
……..
……..
……..

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 27 April 2016. AUTEC Reference number 16/124.

Appendix C *Interview Protocol*

Interview Protocol
1. Introduction The researcher will commence each interview by: • Discussing the purpose of the study • Gaining informed consent using the **Information Sheet** and **Consent Form** • Explaining that the interview is not seeking to judge any opinions, experiences or decisions that may have occurred in the past, or potentially those of the future • Explaining that the interview will be audio-taped
2. Warm-up Discussion • Tell me what you think fast/slow fashion is • Tell me how you would know if fashion was fast/slow • Tell me about a fast/slow fashion purchase you have made
3. Main Body of Interview • Tell me about your experiences with fast/slow fashion • Tell me about the meanings you associate with fast/slow fashion • Tell me about how you use fast/slow fashion • Tell me about why you do/don't would/wouldn't purchase fast/slow fashion • Tell me about your feelings towards fast/slow fashion • Tell me about your beliefs towards fast/slow fashion • Tell me about your attitudes towards fast/slow fashion • Tell me about how you will use fast/slow fashion in the future
4. Conclusion The researcher will conclude each interview by: • Thanking the participant for their time and contribution to the study • Distributing incentive

Appendix D *Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement*

Confidentiality Agreement

Project title: ***I Shop, Therefore I am***
Project Supervisor: ***Dr. Katherine Jones***
Researcher: ***Ellie Descatoires***

- I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.
- I understand that the contents of the recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.
- I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.

Transcriber's signature: .....……

Transcriber's name: .....……

Transcriber's Contact Details:

……..
……..
……..
……..

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 27 April 2016. AUTEC Reference number 16/124.